Miriam Lahrsow

The Author as Annotator

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BEITRÄGE
ZUR ENGLISCHEN UND AMERIKANISCHEN LITERATUR

Im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft herausgegeben von
Matthias Bauer und Jan Stievermann

Band 42

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Ambiguities of Self-Annotation in Pope and Byron



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Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). This work is a result of the Research Training Group "Ambiguität: Produktion und Rezeption", Project number 198647426.





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DOI: https://doi.org/10.30965/9783657795284

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: http://dnb.d-nb.de

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The book was admitted as a doctoral thesis at Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, 2021.

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Cover design: Evelyn Ziegler, Munich
Production: Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn

ISSN 0935-4867
ISBN 978-3-506-79528-1 (paperback)
ISBN 978-3-657-79528-4 (e-book)

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Dedicated to my parents
and
to the memory of
Willi Kiefer (1934–2020),
the most prankish, hardworking, and down-to-earth grandpa
one can imagine

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Acknowledgements

This book is a slightly revised version of my dissertation, which was accepted by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Tübingen in 2021. I am thankful to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for funding this project as well as my research stays in Birmingham and Edinburgh.

I'm deeply grateful to my supervisors, Angelika Zirker and Matthias Bauer, who supported my project with enthusiasm and pushed me to do my best. You always took the time to provide detailed and very helpful feedback, even though your days seem to have (at least!) 48 hours. I really don't know *how* you managed, but I'm infinitely grateful that you did. I'm also thankful to the members of my defence committee: Michael Edson (who also reviewed this thesis and provided many insightful comments), Sandra Richter, and Jürgen Leonhardt. Additionally, I would like to thank all the other professors in the Research Training Group "Ambiguity", who always showed great interest in my project and provided very helpful feedback.

During my research stays, I greatly profited from discussing my work with Andrew Hodgson, Valerie Rumbold, Jane Stabler, Hugh Adlington, and David McClay. Marcus Walsh, Alex Watson, William Denton, Anthony Grafton, and Manja Kürschner likewise offered insightful feedback on my work and I am very grateful to them. I would also like to thank the attendants of the Byron Conference 2019 in Vechta, as well as the coordinators of the Eighteenth-Century Paratext Research Network, Karen McAulay and Corrina Readioff. I also want to thank Rebeca Acosta, who is just as enthusiastic about annotations as I am and who made my trip to Berlin such an enjoyable experience. I am thankful to Ourania Chatsiou for sending me her PhD thesis (and lots of encouragement) and to Andréas Pfersmann for giving me access to a very hard-to-obtain essay. Furthermore, I'd like to thank the staff at the John Murray Archive (especially Kirsty McHugh and Malcolm Anderson) and at the Bodleian Library for their kind assistance. For their technical support, I want to thank the Citavi Support team (especially Sebastian Pabel), Felix Belzile, Thorsten Trippel, Melanie Grumt Suárez, Iris Alber, Axel Braun, and Peter Rempis. I'm also very grateful to Sophia Zschache and Martina Kayser at Brill | Schöningh who have been very helpful throughout the entire publication process.

There are many people in Tübingen without whom my time as a PhD student wouldn't nearly have been as much fun as it was. First of all, I want to thank my colleagues at the GRK "Ambiguität" for their encouragement, for their great help – be it with linguistics or classical Greek –, for all the fun we had at the *GRK-Tage*, for fantastic birthday presents, and for our hilarious lunch meetings,

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during which we (unsuccessfully) tried to teach a certain Hanoverian colleague the intricacies of the Swabian dialect: Sarah Metzger, Selina Bernarding, Maren Ebert-Rohleder, Natascha Elxnath, Lorenz Geiger, Simon Grund, Lea Hofmaier, Joel Klenk, Dilectiss Liu, Anna Schwetz, Gül Stern, Raphael Titt, Dominik Wabersich, Sonja Borchers, Elias Güthlein, Sofiya Kartalova, Nikolai Kohler, Carolin Munderich, Nicolas Potysch, Florian Rohmann, Ellie Schedel, Christian Stegemann-Philipps, Wiltrud Wagner, and Xinxin Zhao. The same goes for my colleagues at the English Department in general and our chair and the *Annotating Literature* project in particular: Leonie Kirchhoff, Lisa Ebert, Susanne Riecker, Sara Rogalski, Curtis Runstedler, Sarah Briest, Jonathan Sharp, Mirjam Haas, Sandra Wetzel, Hannah Braun, Jessica Schuchert, Valerie Niedenführ, Sophia Smolinski, Natalia Christoforou, Lara Täuber, Sontje Schulenburg, Yasemin Caglar, Martina Bross, Timo Stösser, Dan Poston, Nicole Poppe, Lena Moltenbrey, Elena Anastasaki, and the countless research assistants at the *Lehrstuhl Bauer*. Thank you for getting me through the hardships of PhD life, for your helpful and enthusiastic feedback, and, of course, for all the fun we had at the legendary Christmas parties in Bodelshausen. I also want to thank our GRK research assistants Tatjana Mark, Loredana Columbo, and Jan Thore Kirk – I loved working with you and I'm very grateful to have had such diligent and reliable *Hiwis*. A special thanks goes to the 'good souls' of out chair and GRK: Inken Armbrust and Eva Haag, who knew the answer to any question imaginable and who always remained calm and cheerful even in the face of looming deadlines and the pandemic.

My greatest thanks belongs to my family: my parents Marion and Jochen (who sparked my love for literature and history, and who unconditionally supported me even though they – justifiably – could not quite understand why anyone would be crazy enough to write hundreds of pages about footnotes), my brothers Marvin and Moritz (who patiently listened to all those centuries-old anecdotes I told them and who always understand me even though we are so different), my grandparents Willi, Ruth, Kläre, and Helmut, and my godmother Beate (who taught me humility, perseverance, and to always look on the bright side of life). Last but by no means least, I'm infinitely thankful to my best friends Laura and Becky, who always forgave me whenever I had to spend my weekends with Byron and Pope instead of them.

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A Note on the Texts

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from Pope's *Dunciad*s are drawn from Valerie Rumbold's edition of the 1743 version, i.e. *The Dunciad: In Four Books*. Quotes from the poem cite the book and the line number(s) (e.g. *Dunciad* 1.15). Quotes from Pope's notes are likewise cited using the book and the line number(s) of the annotated passage (e.g. *Dunciad* 1.15n). Quotes from earlier versions of the *Dunciad*s will cite the respective year and, if necessary, give the version names provided by Rumbold in her edition of *The Dunciad* (*1728*) *& The Dunciad Variorum* (*1729*) (e.g. 1729a–f *Dunciad* 1.15n).[1] Textual variants will be indicated as "var" (e.g. 1729 *Dunciad* 1.15n var). Notes by the editors of Pope's works will be cited as "editor's n for *Dunciad* 1.15n". Quotes from the other paratexts of the *Dunciad*s provide the respective page number in Rumbold's edition of *The Dunciad: In Four Books* or, if relevant, the respective page number in the 1728 or 1729 versions of the *Dunciad*s (likewise edited by Rumbold). Quotes from Pope's other poems refer to the most recent revision of each poem in the Twickenham Edition (*TE*).[2]

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from Byron's poems and notes are drawn from McGann's edition of Byron's *The Complete Poetical Works* (*CPW*). To make identification as easy as possible, quotes from Byron's poems cite

(1) canto and stanza (*CHP* and *Don Juan*)
(2) stanza (*Beppo, The Vision of Judgment, The Age of Bronze*)
(3) canto and line (*The Prophecy of Dante, The Island, Lara, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair*)
(4) act, scene, and line (all dramas), or
(5) line (everything else).

Since McGann's edition prints all of Byron's annotations as endnotes rather than footnotes, quotes from Byron's annotations cite both the section of the poem to which the note is appended *and* the volume and page number where the annotation can be found in *CPW* (e.g. Byron, *Don Juan* 9.49n; *CPW* 5: 740).

1 For the version numbers, see Rumbold, "Editor's Headnote" in Pope, 1728/29 *Dunciad* 6; 117.
2 The present book does not cover any of the works that are part of the recently published vol. 1 of the Routledge series *The Poems of Alexander Pope* (ed. Julian Ferraro and Paul Baines).

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A Note on Names

When referring to the people ridiculed in Pope's *Dunciad*s, I will use the most commonly accepted spelling variant of their name, even though Pope often spelled their names differently. For instance, I will use Curll instead of Curl, Bezaleel Morrice instead of Besaleel Morris, and James Moore Smythe instead of James-Moore Smith. In direct quotes, I will follow Pope's spelling. When referring to *Dulness* as a 'character' in the poem, I will adopt Pope's spelling with only one *l* throughout.

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List of Abbreviations

BLJ	Byron, George Gordon. *Byron's Letters and Journals.* Edited by Leslie A. Marchand, Murray, 1973–1982. 12 vols.
Corr.	Pope, Alexander. *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*. Edited by George Sherburn, Clarendon, 1956. 5 vols.
CHP	Byron, George Gordon. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.* In: *CPW* 2.
CMP	Byron, George Gordon. *The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*. Edited by Andrew Nicholson, Clarendon, 1991.
CPW	Byron, George Gordon. *The Complete Poetical Works*. Edited by Jerome J. McGann, Clarendon, 1980–93. 7 vols.
EBSR	Byron, George Gordon. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. In: *CPW* 1.
Dunciad	1743 version of the *Dunciad*s: Pope, Alexander. *The Dunciad: In Four Books*. Edited by Valerie Rumbold, Longman, 2009.
1728 *Dunciad*	1728 version of the *Dunciad*s in: Pope, Alexander. *The Dunciad* (*1728*) *& The Dunciad Variorum* (*1729*). Vol. 3 of *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Edited by Valerie Rumbold, Longman, 2007.
1729 *Dunciad*	1729 version of the *Dunciad*s in: Pope, Alexander. *The Dunciad* (*1728*) *& The Dunciad Variorum* (*1729*). Vol. 3 of *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Edited by Valerie Rumbold, Longman, 2007.
PW	Pope, Alexander. *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*. Edited by Norman Ault and Rosemary Cowler. Blackwell, 1936–86. 2 vols.
TE	Pope, Alexander. *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*. General editor John Butt. Methuen, 1939–69. 11 vols.

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Prelude: Self-Annotation, Xenographic Annotation, and Ambiguity

Ambiguity is the "co-existence of two or more meanings" that do not have to be mutually exclusive but that still have to be clearly distinct from one another ("Conceptual Framework" n.pag.; cf. also Winter-Froemel and Zirker 285). One would assume that annotations – be they written by editors or by authors themselves – are the last place in a literary work where one would find the strategic use and creation of ambiguity. After all, annotations are supposedly meant to explain the meaning(s) of a text – to uncover and expound *existing* ambiguities in the annotated work. They are not meant to add completely new ones.

In the present study, however, focussing on Alexander Pope and Lord Byron, I will argue that many literary self-annotations do exactly that. They use various strategies of ambiguation in order to proliferate the meanings of the passages to which they are attached. In some cases, they even ambiguate the whole work in which they appear or, yet even more far-reaching, an author's entire œuvre and public image. Thus, I will use the concept of ambiguity to gain a deeper insight into Pope's and Byron's practices of self-annotation and, in turn, use their authorial notes to learn more about strategic uses of ambiguity in literary texts.

In the context of this book, the terms 'authorial annotation' and 'self-annotation' always mean notes that are written by the same author as the annotated text and that are published together with this text – usually as footnotes or endnotes.[1] Other (para)textual features that are often subsumed under the concepts of 'self-annotation' or 'self-commentary' – e.g. handwritten

1 Even though there are no examples of printed marginal and interlinear notes in Byron and Pope, these would also fall under my definition of self-annotation, as would notes that 'frame' the annotated text on two, three or even all four sides. Notes published in a separate volume but still directly connected (through lemmata) to the text they are referring to would also count as annotations here. The use of the term "main text" in this study merely denotes the text that is being annotated and is not meant to suggest a hierarchisation in which the 'text proper' is at the very centre of a literary work and all paratexts, including self-annotations, can be discounted as secondary or subservient to this main text. I agree with Alex Watson who argues that "the relationship between text and paratext has a complex and fascinating history that is oversimplified by Genette's insistence on the paratext's secondary status" (A. Watson, *Romantic Marginality* 3).

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marginal notes in authors' copies of their own works,[2] prefaces, headnotes, self-reflexive remarks within the main text, private letters, interviews, and essays by authors – are beyond the scope of this study and will not discussed in detail.[3] Self-annotations differ from these other (para)textual features in four main ways. Firstly, unlike handwritten marginalia, private letters, and (usually) interviews, they appear in the same volume as the annotated text and, thus, are available to every reader of the work – they are, in Genette's terminology, peritexts rather than epitexts (cf. Genette 5). Secondly, and in contrast to headnotes, prefaces, etc., authorial annotations are lemmatised, i.e. they are 'anchored' in a smaller, more or less clearly identified part of the main text and address this section directly.[4] Thirdly, unlike self-reflexive remarks within the main text, self-annotations comment on this text from the outside – with all the ambiguities that this 'distancing measure' entails (see below p. 13). Fourthly, and most importantly, of all authorial paratexts, self-annotations have the most complex relationship to a certain type of *editorial* paratext, namely notes composed by scholars on others' works. In what follows, these scholarly annotations written by editors on someone else's text will be called *xenographic*

2 For Byron's handwritten comments in a copy of his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, see A. Watson, "Byron's Marginalia to *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*".

For handwritten marginalia (not necessarily by the author) in general, see Jackson, *Marginalia;* Jackson, *Romantic Readers*; Myers et al., *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*; Sherman, *Used Books*; Orgel, *The Reader in the Book*; Jaspers and Kilcher, *Randkulturen*; Atze and Kaukoreit, *Lesespuren – Spurenlesen*; as well as Spedding and Tankard, *Marginal Notes*.

For Byron's handwritten annotations in Leigh Hunt's draft of *The Story of Rimini*, see Michael Steier's *Byron, Hunt, and the Politics of Literary Engagement*, ch. 4. Byron also added manuscript notes in his copies of John Cam Hobhouse's *Imitations*, Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, and Isaac D'Israeli's *The Literary Character*. These notes are reproduced in Byron, *CMP*. Pope's manuscript annotations in the books that he owned are transcribed in Mack, *Collected in Himself* 395–460.

3 The emphasis on footnotes and endnotes makes my focus narrower than the one that is adopted in, for example, *L'autocommento* (ed. Peron), *Self-Commentary in Early Modern European Literature* (ed. Venturi), and Roberta Ricci's article "Morphologies and Functions of Self-Criticism in Modern Times". All three also consider, among other things, prefaces, headnotes, private letters, advertisements, interviews, and essays by the author. Likewise, Sveva Frigerio's *Linguistica della nota: strategie metatestuali autoriali* does not focus on notes only but also discusses other metatextual elements, e.g. parentheses.

4 On this aspect, also see Genette: "A note is a statement of variable length (one word is enough) connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite or keyed to this segment. The always partial character of the text being referred to, and therefore the always local character of the statement conveyed in a note, seems to me the most distinctive formal feature of this paratextual element" (Genette 319).

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annotations.[5] Xenographic notes can be found as early as the sixth century BC in the form of scholia and glosses on Homer (cf. Novokhatko 30–32), while the practice of literary *self*-annotation began around 1300 (see p. 47 below).

The present study is only concerned with self-annotations, not with xenographic notes. However, as outlined in more detail below, I would like to suggest that self-annotations constantly evoke the conventions and functions of the scholarly discourse tradition of xenographic annotation,[6] while also creatively transforming, flouting, and subverting the rules that govern this older tradition. In order to analyse how exactly self-annotations achieve this, I will spend the first part of this introduction outlining what exactly these conventions of xenographic annotation are. A brief glance at some pertinent examples of xenographic notes will then illustrate that even these scholarly annotations sometimes violate their own discourse conventions, which often results in ambiguity. Nevertheless, I will go on to argue that in xenographic notes ambiguity always to some extent constitutes a *flaw* (from a purely scholarly point of

5 Genette proposes the term 'allographic' for annotations that were written by an editor on someone else's work. However, he confusingly uses this expression for both notes that were written by an author's associate and that were included in the work at the request of the author (cf. Genette 8–9; 179) *and* for notes written by "editors in more or less critical editions, or the notes by translators", i.e. annotations usually appended without authors' knowledge and often after their death (Genette 322). (Yet, he elsewhere explains that editorial notes do not fall under his definition of paratext in the first place, cf. Genette 9; 337.).

In order to avoid confusion, I propose to use the term 'allographic' only for notes of the first type, i.e. such as were written by someone else at the request of the author. Examples of such notes are those composed by William Warburton for the 1743 version of Pope's *Dunciad*s and those written by Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse for the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (*CHP*). Even though allographic notes are not written by the author of the annotated text, they are more closely related to authorial notes than to xenographic ones because – similar to self-annotations – allographic notes can (at least to some extent) be regarded as an integral part of the annotated text given that the author of this text usually had the chance to propose, alter, and omit allographic notes.

This is not the case with the second type of notes mentioned by Genette. It is only for these – the scholarly editorial notes that were appended to a text without its author's knowledge and request, and that hence cannot be seen as an integral part of this text itself – that I will use the term 'xenographic'.

6 Throughout, I will use the concept of discourse traditions developed by Peter Koch, who understands discourse traditions as an umbrella term for cross-linguistic, time-dependent, culture-dependent traditions into which spoken and written utterances inscribe themselves (cf. Koch 45; 51–53). For instance, discourse traditions include genres, stanzaic forms, youth slangs, technical jargons, and different speech acts. A single utterance or text can also inscribe itself into a great number of different discourse traditions (cf. Kabatek 98). These discourse traditions are governed by certain discourse rules or conventions, which are upheld by occupational groups, literary schools, political movements, etc. (cf. Koch 49). I am grateful to Esme Winter-Froemel for drawing my attention to Koch's concept.

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view), whereas it is a defining (and desired) *feature* of literary self-annotations. Afterwards, I will show why existing studies that aim at providing a systematic overview of the strategies used in, and functions of, self-annotations (be it in the context of studying one work, author, or even self-annotations as a whole) often fall short of considering these notes in their fascinating intricacies, and I will propose an alternative approach to categorising authorial notes. In a next step, I will outline how the notion of ambiguity can be made fruitful for an analysis of literary self-annotations in their full complexity and how, in turn, the study of authorial notes can tell us more about literary uses of ambiguity. In a last step in this introduction, I will explain why Pope and Byron present two especially intriguing case-studies in the field of literary self-annotation.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Xenographic Annotations: Unequivocal in Theory – Partly Ambiguous in Practice

The discourse tradition of xenographic annotations is made up of a multitude of sub-traditions which are influenced by different cultural environments, schools of thought, assumptions about the duties of a scholarly editor, conjectures about readerly needs, etc. But even though xenographic notes are an "extremely complex, multifaceted genre that resists definition" and are characterised by their "versatility and elusiveness" (Enenkel and Nellen, "Introduction" 59), they are nevertheless governed by a few conventions that – at least in theory – pertain to the discourse tradition as a whole.[1] Firstly, such notes have four main (and partly overlapping) functions:

1 For a diachronic overview of xenographic annotations on classical literature, see Kraus and Stray (eds.), *Classical Commentaries* as well as Gibson and Kraus (eds.), *The Classical Commentary.* For xenographic annotations in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see Montanari et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*; Sluiter, "The Dialectics of Genre"; Sluiter, "The Violent Scholiast"; L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*; Most (ed.), *Commentaries – Kommentare*; Goulet-Caze (ed.), *Le commentaire;* Geerlings and Schulze, *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter*; and J. Assmann and Gladigow (eds.), *Text und Kommentar*. For medieval commentaries, see Minnis and A. B. Scott (eds.), *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*; and Sandkühler, *Die frühen Dantekommentare und ihr Verhältnis zur mittelalterlichen Kommentartradition*.
For xenographic annotations and textual criticism in the Renaissance and Early Modern Age, see Besomi and Caruso (eds.), *Il commento ai testi*; Buck and Herding (eds.), *Der Kommentar in der Renaissance;* Enenkel and Nellen (eds.), *Neo-Latin Commentaries*; Enenkel (ed.), *Transformations of the Classics via Early Modern Commentaries*; D. Parker, *Commentary and Ideology*; Häfner and Völkel (eds.), *Der Kommentar in der Frühen Neuzeit;* Mathieu-Castellani and Plaisance (eds.), *Les commentaires et la naissance de la critique littéraire*; Pade (ed.), *On Renaissance Commentaries*; Regn (ed.), *Questo leggiadrissimo Poeta!*; Gaisser, *Catullus and his Renaissance Readers;* Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger, Vol. 1*; Slights, *Managing Readers*; Stadeler, *Horazrezeption in der Renaissance*; Stillers, *Humanistische Deutung*; and White, *Jodocus Badius Ascensius: Commentary, Commerce and Print in the Renaissance*.
For annotations, both explanatory and emendatory, in the eighteenth century, see Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing*; Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment*; Edson, "Annotator as Ordinary Reader"; Edson, "Romantic Juvenal"; and Edson (ed.), *Annotation in Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (the latter focussing on both xenographic and authorial notes).

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(1) emendation and textual criticism, i.e. trying to establish the correct text, justifying one's textual choices, and recording variants;[2]
(2) explanation and information, which comprises annotations that strive to elucidate the text, notes that show readers how they can make practical use of the text in their own life (e.g. by imitating its rhetorical style in their own writing or by following its moral lessons), and annotations that take the text as a starting point to provide readers with different pieces of information and advice that the annotator perceives to be interesting or worth knowing, even if they are not immediately relevant for understanding the annotated text;[3]
(3) interpretation;[4] and
(4) evaluation, i.e. passing scholarly, moral, or aesthetic judgment on the text, defending the text, anticipating as well as reacting to criticism against the text, and implicitly conferring canonical status on the annotated text by presenting it as worthy of annotation.[5]

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2 Textual emendation as one form of annotation dates back to the fifth century BC (cf. Novokhatko 38). For theories and practices of textual criticism in the Renaissance and the Augustan Age, see the beginning of chapter 2.1.1.1 below as well as pp. 148–150.

3 Enenkel, for example, explains: "Different from scholarly commentaries from the 19th century until today, early modern commentaries were not primarily or exclusively focused on explaining […] the supposedly authentic meaning of works of the past in a historical sense. […] In their commentaries they tried to mediate the classical text in a way that would guarantee a maximum profit with respect to general knowledge […], moral education, knowledge of facts in various fields and disciplines, identity formation […], school and university education, mastery of the Latin language […], and so on" (Enenkel, "Introduction" 4). Similarly, Francesco Venturi notes that "early modern running commentaries tend to incorporate matter unrelated to the source text: they are constantly stopping to make space for heavy-handed digressions or personal observations, and often expand to the extent that they become encyclopedic repositories of knowledge across disparate fields" (Venturi, "Introduction" 6). Also see Enenkel and Nellen, "Introduction" 17–31; Grafton, "Renaissance Readers and Ancient Texts" 618–19; Moss 234–47; D. Parker 45–49; East 130–34; Sandy 56; Leonhardt 209; and Jeanneret 36.

4 To name only one example, Renaissance scholar Cristoforo Landino's commentary on the *Aeneid* heavily relies on an allegorical-philosophical interpretative approach (cf. Kallendorf 201–06).

5 In his typology of ancient commentaries, Markus Dubischar mentions, for example, agonistic commentaries, in which the annotators "openly challenge the primary text's validity (often also that of other commentaries that may have been written in the meantime) and the primary writer's authority" (Dubischar 560). He also discusses *zetemata*, which "isolate[] and target[] passages that are particularly troublesome, this approach lends itself well to apologetic purposes, when certain features of the primary text must be not merely explained but in fact justified against substantial criticism" (Dubischar 564). For another kind of evaluative xenographic annotation – that of using the commentary for an aesthetic appreciation of the

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Often, a single note performs more than one of these functions. Secondly, xenographic annotations are, in theory, informed by a notion of sound scholarship. In other words, readers can be more or less certain that xenographic annotators provide them with information that they believe to be correct and to be sufficient as well as relevant for the respective target audiences of their editions.[6] Furthermore, readers can assume that xenographic annotators do their best to make their commentaries as comprehensible as possible. Thus, even though xenographic annotations often present and discuss the different possible interpretations that the annotated text gives rise to,[7] they themselves usually strive (and sometimes fail) to bring across their point as unequivocally and straightforwardly as possible.[8] Even if a commentary violates any of the three criteria of adequacy (neither too much nor too little information), correctness, and intelligibility, readers can presume that the respective xenographic annotator acted in good faith and did not willingly mislead them or waste their time. Of course, what counts as (sufficiently) relevant, correct, and intelligible depends greatly on the historical and scholarly context in which an annotation is written.[9]

Thirdly and lastly, the enunciatory, temporal, factual, and (para)textual status of xenographic annotations may be assumed to be rather unambiguous. Readers can be almost certain that the voice speaking in the annotation is that

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main text –, see Pope's rationale for annotating his *Iliad* translation, which will be briefly discussed on p. 57ff. below.

For the important role that xenographic notes played in granting *auctoritas* and canonical status to a text (and, sometimes, also in calling this status into question) see Enenkel and Nellen, "Introduction" 15–17.

6 That the notion of relevance in xenographic annotation is not a new one is, for example, shown in Caspar von Barth's 1664 edition of Statius, in which the annotator often feels the need to defend his digressive notes and which was criticised for being full of irrelevant information by other contemporary editors (cf. Berlincourt *passim*).

7 For instance, "early modern *variorum* editions and ancient scholia either string together citations with the intention of multiplying meaning (or multiplying authority?), or list alternative readings without necessarily privileging one over the other" (Gibson, "Cf., e.g." 342–43).

8 The criterion of comprehensibility is, for instance, evoked by twelfth-century scholar Ioannes Tzetzes who, in his Hesiod commentary, reproaches one of his annotatorial predecessors for his obscurity (cf. Pontani 380).

9 For example, Michael Edson points out that many eighteenth-century editors of satires were less interested in identifying the persons that the author intended to satirise than to record how other readers identified them, often based on gossipy and unreliable newspaper articles (cf. Edson, "Annotator as Ordinary Reader" 44). Thus, notes that would have been seen as relevant three hundred years ago, are often seen as faulty, speculative, and superfluous today. Moreover, an annotation that would be relevant in an edition aimed at school students would often be perceived as superfluous in an edition aimed at scholarly experts. Hence, the correctness and relevance of a xenographic note are time- and audience-dependent.

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of the real-life editor, that the note should be read as a later comment on an existing text, and that the annotation is part of a factual paratext that exists completely outside of the text that it is commenting on. Taking together the four main functions of xenographic annotations, the notions of sound scholarship and 'good faith' that inform such annotations, and their unequivocal status, it can be concluded that, *in principle*, (1) xenographic annotations are themselves quite unambiguous with regard to their purpose(s), (2) that, for the sake of intelligibility, the rhetorical strategies employed in them are designed to avoid ambiguity, and (3) that they generally strive to elucidate – or even reduce – the ambiguities of the annotated text rather than add completely new ones to it.

In practice, however, things sometimes lie differently. For instance, rather than providing readers with information that is immediately relevant for understanding (or making practical, moral, etc. use of) the text, editors may employ their notes for purposes of social networking with friends, relatives, patrons, and other scholars. Prominent fifteenth-century commentator Filippo Beroaldo, for example, often uses his annotations to extol the influential Bentivoglio family and to introduce personal anecdotes, e.g. about his recent marriage and his wife's pregnancy (cf. Casella 662; Gaisser, "Teaching Classics in the Renaissance" 8; Krautter 44–52).[10] In fact, Renaissance commentators often take a prominent, overt role in their own annotations and provide a wealth of information about themselves that has little to do with the annotated text or at least their scholarly qualifications (cf. Céard 104–05). In other cases, editors take the work that is to be annotated merely as a pretext to present their own, more or less unrelated, research (cf. Sluiter, "The Violent Scholiast" 193; Dubischar 560). In all of these examples, the function and maybe even genre of the annotations is ambiguated: are they scholarly commentaries, or – depending on the case – attempts at securing patronage, personal memoirs, or independent academic treatises?

On a related but still different note, editors sometimes offer (or are forced to offer) deliberately incomplete commentaries. For instance, in 1939, Ernst

10 The annotations of Beroaldo's student Giambattista Pio likewise feature many personal anecdotes (cf. Passannante *passim*). The social function of early-modern xenographic annotations in general is also stressed by Enenkel and Nellen: "Another important feature of the commentary was its capacity to establish and confirm group cohesion. Commentaries on a canonical text were conducive to the formation and strengthening of the identity of a nation, religious denomination, scholarly community or any other distinct group in society. […] The commentary's capacity for strengthening esprit de corps among its readers is closely connected to its use as a polemical tool" (Enenkel and Nellen, "Introduction" 35).

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Beutler was urged by his publisher to omit all references to the Talmud in his commentary on Goethe's *Faust* (cf. Bohnenkamp 129), and Renaissance scholar Cristoforo Landino often abstained from commenting on the homoerotic elements in Horace's poems (cf. Stadeler 124–29). Most Renaissance commentators of Catullus also chose not to annotate obscene words and bawdy passages (cf. Stadeler 140–41). In these cases, editors are being led more by considerations of what *may* be annotated than what *should* be annotated because, objectively speaking, it is relevant for a better understanding the text at hand. Thus, the social and historical context in which an edition appears often results in annotators consciously violating the scholarly soundness of their xenographic annotations.[11]

Furthermore, the enunciatory status of xenographic annotations is not as unambiguous as it may seem at first sight. Sometimes, editors blur the boundaries between authorial and xenographic annotation by presenting themselves as both the alter egos and the collaborators of their authors, e.g. by pretending that the original writers are speaking through them (cf. Céard 108; Sluiter, "The Dialectics of Genre" 191). Commentators' voices are further ambiguated by the fact that they usually incorporate material from earlier editions, thus letting both themselves and their predecessors speak at the same time (cf. Kraus 16).

To conclude, even in the case of xenographic annotations, practices are much more ambiguous than discourse conventions and functions suggest in theory. Nevertheless, these conventions and functions provide a set of criteria on the basis of which one can judge editorial notes from a purely scholarly point of view. For instance, it is possible to call Beroaldo's digressive notes 'irrelevant' with regard to the annotated text and Beutler's censored annotations 'incomplete', and it would be rather difficult to refute this line of argument. In other words, xenographic notes may certainly violate the conventions of their discourse tradition, but this violation always entails that the annotations are 'flawed' to some extent since they fail to fulfil their scholarly functions.[12]

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11 Of course, editors also sometimes *inadvertently* violate the rules of the discourse convention. For common problems and pitfalls to be found in xenographic annotations, see Bauer and Zirker, "Explanatory Annotation of Literary Texts and the Reader"; Bauer and Zirker, "Understanding (Through) Annotations"; and Goulden, "Approaches to the Contextual Annotation of Nineteenth-Century Historical Fiction". For example, Bauer and Zirker mention 'stating the obvious', 'presupposing (expert) knowledge', and 'sending the reader on the wrong track'.

12 See, for instance, sixteenth-century scholar Franciscus Floridus Sabinus's scathing comment on Beroaldo's edition of Apuleius: "Enimvero cum in eo, quem delegeris, enarrando id tantum proferre debeas, quod auctoris sententiam commode explicet, hic non ea solum passim effundit, quibus nullus sit apud eruditorum aures locus, sed bellorum, quae ipso vivente gerebantur, eventus docet, villarum situs describit, & multorum obitus

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In literary self-annotations, this is not necessarily the case – unless they signal that they are meant to be judged by the rules that govern xenographic ones, i.e. that the author strives to provide exactly the information that a competent scholarly editor would supply.[13] But even in such cases, there is a difference between self-annotations and xenographic annotations: when xenographic notes are found lacking from a scholarly point of view, this only has consequences for how we assess the editor's expertise. But when the same occurs in self-annotations that strive to be scholarly, it has a negative impact on how we evaluate the entire work because it raises questions about the author's knowledge and competence in writing about a certain topic. For instance, Byron's poem "Lachin Y Gair" stresses his Scottish heritage and the fact that he spent a great portion of his childhood in the Highlands. However, in an annotation he incorrectly translates the term "pibroch" as "bagpipe" – a mistake for which he was ridiculed by reviewers[14] and which casts doubt on Byron's Scottishness, the very aspect around which the poem revolves (cf. "Lachin Y Gair" 31n; *CPW* 1: 373).

Byron's note on the pibroch was a self-annotation that set out to imitate a xenographic one and, thus, to adhere to the rule of correctness.[15] It inadvertently violated this rule and hence can be seen as a failed note. However, many of Pope's and Byron's annotations explicitly or implicitly signal that they

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in suis commentationibus deplorat", i.e. "Even though one should only provide so much information as is needed to explicate his meaning when commenting on an author, this one [Beroaldo] often provides such stuff as would not interest the educated and also tells us about the outcomes of wars that were fought in his lifetime, describes the locations of villas, and mourns many deceased people in his comments" (my translation based on Krautter's German translation; cf. Krautter 49). Sabinus's comment is reprinted in Janus Gruterus's 1602 *Lampas, sive fax atrium liberalium* (Gruterus 1: 1121; cf. Krautter 49).

13 This is the case, for example, in Thomas Moore's self-annotations on *Lalla Rookh* (see p. 229 below).

14 In his damning review of Byron's *Hours of Idleness* (the review that provoked Byron into writing *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*), Henry Brougham comments on the mistake as follows: "There is a good deal also about his maternal ancestors, in a poem on Lachin-y-gair, a mountain where he spent part of his youth, and might have learnt that *pibroch* is not a bagpipe, any more than duet means a fiddle" (Brougham 288, original emphasis).

15 Another way of reading the incorrect note is that Byron deliberately mistranslated the term to emphasise his growing estrangement from Scotland – an aspect that is introduced through yet another self-annotation in "Lachin Y Gair" (see chapter 3.4.1). This is unlikely, however, since Byron was extremely concerned about the factual correctness of his works (see p. 247 n) and – if the note were incorrect on purpose – would have included an indication of this to prevent readers from attributing the mistake to his ignorance. His bitter reaction to the review that pointed out this mistake likewise hints at the fact that the blunder was indeed committed involuntarily (see p. 258 n).

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deliberately strive to transform, flout, or undermine the conventions of xenographic annotations for literary, social, political, or other purposes. In these notes, the 'failure' to follow the rules of xenographic annotation is not a flaw but a strategy. A strategy that often draws on the inherent ambiguity of the discourse convention of self-annotation and that, in turn, frequently results in new ambiguities.

1.2 Why the 'Self' in Self-Annotation Matters, Or: Hotbeds of Ambiguity

This line may puzzle the [future] commentators more than the present generation. – Byron, *Don Juan*

> Alluding to a verse of Mr. *Dryden's* not in *Mac Flecno* (as it is said ignorantly in the Key to the *Dunciad, pag.* l.) but in his verses to Mr. *Congreve*: 'And *Tom* the Second reigns like *Tom* the First'. – Pope, *Dunciad Variorum*

If we found the first note among the editor's commentary in a scholarly edition of Byron's *Don Juan*, we would most likely feel confused or annoyed, and conclude that the editor must have fundamentally misunderstood his or her task. Why annotate a line that allegedly does not (yet) require annotation in the first place? Why speculate on what future scholars and readers will not understand? Why not use your superior knowledge and just spell out the inside joke for the benefit of posterity? Worse still: why alienate those contemporary readers to whom the meaning of the line may not be clear after all? Penned by an editor, this note would violate several of the conventions that govern xenographic annotations, such as relevance with respect to the annotated passage, helpfulness, and clarity. At best, the annotation could serve as an interesting case study of editors who neglect their task to crack jokes and who try to establish a relationship with those privileged readers who already share the editor's own horizon of understanding. Readers could not even be sure that the allusion that this editor hints at is actually present in the annotated lines – the rather unprofessional xenographic annotator might simply be misinterpreting the text.

By contrast, in the second quote – taken from an annotation on Alexander Pope's *Dunciad Variorum* – the author of the annotation appears to have done a pretty good job. At first sight, the note seems to offer a helpful, trustworthy, and easily comprehensible explanation of an intertextual reference, despite

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being rather rude to a previous editor of the work. If it was a xenographic note, we would have no reason to assume that its author was being ironical or even deliberately misleading; our experience tells us that this is not something that most scholarly commentators are prone to do. However, these two notes were, of course, not written by professional editors but by Byron and Pope themselves (cf. Byron, *Don Juan* 12.37n; *CPW* 5: 754; Pope, 1729 *Dunciad* 1.6n, original emphasis). The fact that the two notes quoted above are self-annotations rather than xenographic ones makes them appear in a completely different light.[16]

In the case of Byron, the 'unhelpful' note is not the result of an editor's eccentric and self-absorbed approach to annotating – in which case the note could very well simply be ignored by readers who are trying to make sense of the lines. Rather, its apparent irrelevance is part of the *author's strategy* and, thus, an integral component of the meaning of the passage. Byron's note is appended to a segment of the poem that muses on the fact that some ladies marry "him who scarce pursued at all. / A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure" (*Don Juan* 12.37). The very fact that his annotation cheekily engages readers in a satirical guessing game and that it behaves so differently from a xenographic

16 There is tangible proof that contemporary readers were fully aware that Pope's and Byron's self-annotations were indeed self-annotations rather than xenographic ones. For instance, in *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examin'd*, Pope's enemies George Duckett, Thomas Burnet, and John Dennis argue that Pope had "(like Caesar) written his own Commentaries, and given himself various Readings upon himself", for which he had sometimes "borrow'd, and very properly, the Name of Martinus Scriblerus" (Duckett et al. 1; 2, original emphasis). And in a review of Byron's *The Giaour*, the *Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany* (Oct. 1813) complains: "We do not think there is anything positively bad in this volume, except the notes. These Lord Byron seems to have studied to write in a manner the most opposite possible to that in which he has composed the poem" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 772).

There are two main reasons why it was rather easy for readers to recognise self-annotations as self-annotations. Firstly, xenographic notes are usually appended to older, canonised works. When encountering a recent (or even brand-new) literary publication with annotations, one can be rather sure that these were written by the author (or at least the author's associates) rather than by a professional editor. And, secondly, in the case of xenographic notes, the scholarly editor's name is usually mentioned on the title page (a convention already observed in Pope's and Byron's ages). The *Dunciad*s mention their 'editor' Martinus Scriblerus on the title page, but he was an obviously fictional character, and Richard Bentley (to whom several notes and other paratexts in the post-1742 *Dunciad*s are attributed) was known to be an enemy of Pope. Thus, readers could easily grasp that it was not the real-life Bentley who was writing notes praising and defending Pope's poem and whose annotations often made fun of the actual Bentley's approach to textual criticism. Nevertheless, some self-annotated works also make a more serious effort to obscure the authorship of their notes, see p. 13.

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note adds to its rhetorical force and humour. Byron's refusal to spell out the allusion – infuriating as it would be in an editorial comment – here serves various social and literary purposes. By its mere existence, the annotation acknowledges that the passage is not meant as a general comment on the marriage market but that it refers to one or more specific incidents. Its ostensible irrelevance points to its actual relevance. Instead of naming names (which would have seemed rather tasteless and might even have caused a duel),[17] the annotation trusts that most contemporary readers are able to decipher the meaning by themselves. Given the scandals that the two possible referents[18] of Byron's allusion caused shortly before this canto of *Don Juan* was published, it is likely that many readers were indeed able to understand the joke. The (at first sight) uninformative annotation thus creates a sense of intimacy between

17 For an occasion on which one of Byron's annotations indeed almost caused bloodshed, see p. 236 below.

18 The passage either refers to the annulment of the marriage of Mary Anne Hanson and John Wallop, 3rd Earl of Portsmouth, in 1823, or to the wedding of Anne Keppel and Thomas Coke in 1822 (cf. editor's n in Byron, *CPW* 5: 754).

In 1814, Mary Anne Hanson had married the recently widowed Earl of Portsmouth, who had been mentally unstable since at least 1800 (cf. D. L.-L. Moore, *Lord Byron* 460). Mary Anne was the daughter of Portsmouth's lawyer John Hanson, who controlled Portsmouth's property and more or less acted as his guardian (cf. 461). Byron (who was likewise Hanson's client) gave away the bride, without, as he later explained, being aware of the earl's insanity and the Hanson family's rather questionable motives for, and means of, contriving the union (cf. 462; *BLJ* 10: 124–25). Throughout the marriage, Mary Anne, her sister Laura, and Mary Anne's lover W. R. Alder verbally and physically abused Portsmouth (cf. D. L.-L. Moore 464; Hobhouse, *Byron's Bulldog* 325). After the annulment of the marriage due to the earl's insanity, a lengthy report was issued (*A Genuine Report of the Proceedings on the Portsmouth Case*, 1823) which scandalised the public with its lurid details of Mary Anne and her lover having sex in front of the earl, of the countess regularly whipping her husband, etc. For more information on the scandal, see D. L.-L. Moore, *Lord Byron* 459–71; Suzuki 12–18; *BLJ* 4: 235–37; 10: 124–25; and Hobhouse, *Byron's Bulldog* 146–47; 175; 325–27.

The marriage of Anne Keppel and Thomas Coke (later created Earl of Leicester) was a lot more harmonious but nevertheless caused considerable outrage. Twenty-year-old Keppel was supposed to marry Coke's nephew but, on his refusal, became engaged to Coke himself, who was a widower and fifty (!) years her senior. Unsurprisingly, this development "created the greatest excitement" among the public in 1822 (Stirling 2: 283). John Wishaw, for example, noted that the "absurd marriage" was the "general topic of conversation" (Wishaw 244). What added to the outrage was that, in the same year, Keppel's father (the 4th Earl of Albemarle) had married Coke's niece; thus, Keppel became her own father's aunt (cf. Stirling 2: 282). After the birth of the Cokes's first child in 1823, Byron wrote to Leigh Hunt that their "Union [had] promised fewer births than jokes" (*BLJ* 10: 88). Unlike Portsmouth, Coke does not seem to have been "hazy", and he was much older than "turned of forty's sure". Thus, it is likely that the passage in *Don Juan* primarily satirises the Hanson-Portsmouth rather than the Keppel-Coke marriage.

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Byron and many of his readers, a feeling of 'us vs. them' – 'them' being the poem's future readers and those contemporaries who are not in on the joke. This explicit and teasing exclusion of certain readerships, which would be deemed rather condescending and unprofessional in an editorial note, makes for an entertaining and clever literary strategy in an authorial one. Byron's note invites readers to participate in the meaning-making of the poem, allows a part of them to congratulate themselves on sharing his horizon of understanding, and, perhaps more seriously, makes a point about the ephemeral nature of even the greatest scandals and most widely circulated gossip. Furthermore, by not spelling out the allusion, Byron also allows his readers to decide for themselves how biting and risqué the satire in this passage eventually is. If they disambiguate the lines as referring to the Keppel-Coke marriage (see note 18), the stanza is merely concerned with a rather extreme though ultimately harmless example of a May-December relationship. If, however, the passage is read as a hint at the Hanson-Portsmouth marriage (see note 18), the satire becomes much more serious – a glimpse at some of the darker aspects of the high-society marriage market: fraud, violence, adultery, legacy hunting, and ruthless social climbing. Due to the apparent unhelpfulness of the annotation, the blame for this latter disambiguation is shifted from Byron to the readers. *He* intimated no such thing; if they want to interpret the passage in this way, it is their own fault. Lastly, the fact that the annotation prefers to remain silent on the background of the passage may also be a self-ironic reference to Byron's wish to forget or gloss over his own role (marginal though it was) in the disastrous Hanson-Portsmouth marriage (see note 18). In short, the seeming failure of the annotation contributes to its actual satirical effectiveness; it informs by refusing to explain and invites dangerous interpretation without explicitly endorsing it.[19] Furthermore, the – at first sight – irrelevant note is still helpful for future readers: by drawing their attention to the fact that there is indeed an allusion that *could* be explicated, it encourages them to do their own research and solve the puzzle.

In the case of Pope, the 'intertextual' annotation that would have seemed helpful and trustworthy if written by an editor becomes suspicious when one knows that it was composed by Pope himself. At the time when readers encounter this note, they have already made their way through dozens of pages of prefatorial matter (likewise composed by Pope) that teem with ironies, quotes that deliberate misrepresent Pope's enemies, and just plain fabrications (like the fiction that the *Dunciad Variorum* is edited by a man called

19 For a detailed discussion of another seemingly 'failed' self-annotation in *Don Juan*, see chapter 3.2.2.3.

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Martinus Scriblerus). Put briefly, even this early on in the footnote apparatus, readers know that they have to take every piece of information provided in the *Dunciad*s[20] with a grain of salt. And even if one were to consider the note in isolation, its context and readers' knowledge about Pope's political affiliation strongly hint at the fact that this innocent explanation should not be taken at face value.

Appended to the lines "Say from what cause, in vain decry'd and curst, / Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first?", Pope's annotation claims that the passage is merely a reference to Dryden's poem "To My Dear Friend Mr Congreve" (1729 *Dunciad* 1.5–6). This poem indeed contains the lines "But now not I, but poetry, is cursed; / For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first" (Dryden, *Works* 4: ll. 47–48). Dryden is here alluding to Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal Thomas Shadwell being succeeded as Historiographer Royal by Thomas Rymer. (Before he was dismissed in the aftermath of the 1688 Revolution, Dryden himself had held both of these offices.) According to the note, then, the annotated passage in Pope's satire either ridicules dunce and Poet Laureate Laurence Eusden, who succeeded Laureate Nicholas Rowe in 1718, or Lewis Theobald, whom the three-book *Dunciad*s depict as succeeding Elkanah Settle as king of the dunces. Both of these interpretations are plausible, given that Eusden, Theobald, and Settle are recurring victims of Pope's jokes throughout the *Dunciad*s. While both of these interpretations are insulting, they are ultimately rather harmless. However, contemporary readers would immediately have discovered a much more dangerous meaning in the lines, one that is not at all addressed in the note. The first version of the *Dunciad*s was published in 1728, just one year after George II had succeeded George I. Is Pope – the highly suspicious Catholic Tory-sympathiser who had extolled the last Stuart queen and who counted several Jacobites among his friends – cursing the ruling House of Hanover? The annotation pretends to forestall such an interpretation, while ironically drawing attention to how forced its own 'innocent' disambiguation is, given Pope's background and the rather obvious topical allusion.[21] The annotator doth protest too much; the disambiguation

20 Throughout this book, I will use the plural *Dunciad*s for all the different versions of this satire that appeared from 1728 onwards. When referring to a specific edition, I will cite the year and, when necessary, the version number given in Rumbold's "Editor's Headnote" in Pope, 1728/29 *Dunciad* 6; 117. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are drawn from the 1743 four-book *Dunciad*, which will be cited without giving the year. For more information, see "A Note on the Texts".

21 As Eve Bannet points out, this was a very common strategy in eighteenth-century satire: "The rhetorical figure of *recusatio*, denying to affirm, was widely used in prefaces and prologues to protect the writer from prosecution by denying that any specific person or

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becomes a mock-disambiguation, and all three meanings – the two innocuous ones and the dangerous one – are maintained.[22] In a scholarly editor, such an absurdly restrictive 'disambiguation' would be seen as the result of mere ignorance and a failure to understand the passage and its historical background. In a self-annotator, however, it is deliberately ironic and serves a satiric strategy. Readers are aware that scholars can never fully reconstruct authors' intentions, opinions, background knowledge, etc. but that authors *themselves* obviously know what they are trying to say in a passage, what allusions they are making, and what kinds of background information they are drawing from. If *their* annotations overlook rather evident allusions, propose nonsensical interpretations, and plead general ignorance of a text's meaning, readers know that they are confronted with an interpretative cat-and-mouse game rather than a scholarly disaster.

The two annotations by Pope and Byron use very different rhetorical means – Byron's pretends to be irreverently uninformative, whereas Pope's feigns disambiguation. The aims of both annotations, however, are rather similar. Both invite readers to decide for themselves whether they want to acknowledge the dangerous subtext of the respective poetic passages. Both also rely on assumptions about (contemporary) readers' background knowledge without which this subtext cannot be uncovered. But most importantly, both annotations can only achieve these aims because readers are aware that they were written by the author rather than a scholarly editor.[23] It is because of their authorship that they must not be seen as irrelevant, incorrect, incomplete, or plainly failed but as creative ways of inviting readers to discover the satiric import of the annotated passages themselves.

The comparison between xenographic and authorial annotations can be summed up as follows: while xenographic notes usually determine meaning(s) and either simply register existing ambiguities or disambiguate them altogether, authorial ones proliferate meanings and introduce completely new ambiguities. In other words, in xenographic annotations the use and creation of ambiguity can generally be seen as a flaw or at least a strange aberration, but in authorial annotations ambiguity becomes a strategic device. This

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situation was intended while alerting readers to the hidden presence of politically dangerous allusions or ideas" (Bannet 233).

22 For the possible legal reasons for including such ironical disavowals of dangerous readings in the annotations, see chapter 2.1.2.

23 Also compare Anthony Ossa-Richardson's comment on the *Dunciad*s: "The meaning of any given note, and the degree of its irony, is different if we think it by Pope himself, his collaborator Warburton, or a third party, such as a later editor – or one pretending to be the other" (Ossa-Richardson 265).

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device often relies on the fact that self-annotations are inherently ambiguous themselves. For one, there are often two different possibilities of describing the temporal status of authorial annotations: are they synchronic asides embedded in the temporal frame of the main text – similar to parentheses? Or are they diachronic, later comments on an existing text? Furthermore, self-annotations are ambiguous with respect to the question whether they are (1) factual explanations of a fictional text or (2) themselves (partly or entirely) fictional or (3) a factual sign that the annotated text is to be read as (partly) factual as well.[24] Closely related to this is the question of their (para)textual status: are self-annotations really *para*textual features, i.e. external to the main text, or are they an integral part of it?[25] Lastly, there is an ambiguity of voice or, put differently: an enunciatory ambiguity. Who do we 'hear' in an annotation? The real-life author, a fictionalised version of that author, the narrator (who may likewise be aligned with the author or not), or an entirely new fictional character?[26] And, in the two latter cases, in what relationship do these fictional(ised) voices stand to the author – are they mouthpieces, antagonists that are being ironised, or maybe something completely different?

To make matters even more complicated, many works deliberately obscure the authorship of their notes and either pretend that the author's notes were written by someone else or that someone else's notes were written by the author (cf. Venturi, "Introduction" 20–21). Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* is a famous example of the first case; it claims that the notes were composed by Gerardus Listrius, but they are generally believed to be Erasmus's own (cf. Griffiths 108; Slights, "Edifying Margins" 710–11). In Byron's and Pope's works, we are sometimes confronted with the second case, i.e. annotations written by someone

24 Frank Zipfel, for instance, notes that self-annotations can be read as signposts of both factuality and fictionality (cf. Zipfel 119). Furthermore, regarding the annotations in the *Dunciad*s, it has often been argued that they raise the question whether they provide factual information on the dunces or, rather, join the poem in creating fictional images of Pope's enemies which do not correspond to their real-life incarnations (cf. A. L. Williams 60–64; Dürrenmatt, "Ce que les notes disent de la fiction" § 3).

25 For example, Genette points out that self-annotations "call[] into question [their] paratextual character. The original note is a local detour or a momentary fork in the text, and as such it belongs to the text almost as much as a simple parenthesis does. With this kind of note we are in a very undefined fringe between text and paratext" (Genette 328; also cf. 342). Also see Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 157; Griffin 219–20; Webb 136; and Sedlmeier 70.

26 Many critics argue that in self-annotations we can hear the real-life author speaking to us directly (cf. A. Levine 130–31; Labbe, *Charlotte Smith* 48–49; Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics* 108). However, as I will show throughout, many self-annotations raise the question whether it is indeed the 'real' author's opinions and feelings that we can find in them (see esp. chapter 3.2.1). For this aspect, also see Archer 193.

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else but presented as if they were the author's own. This goes for the annotation on the setting of *Lara* that Byron had asked his friend John Cam Hobhouse to write (cf. *BLJ* 4: 143–44; 146), and, more importantly, for the notes that William Warburton contributed to Pope's 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books*.[27] After Pope's death, Warburton signed his annotations in the 1751 edition of the work, but, as Valerie Rumbold points out, his authorship attributions are not entirely trustworthy, given that Warburton had a "vested interest in emphasising his importance to the project" and might have overstated his involvement (editor's introduction to *Dunciad* 2).[28] Hence, discussing self-annotations often entails discussing which annotations can actually be seen as such.[29]

Apart from their ambiguous temporal, enunciatory, (para)textual, and factual status as well as their sometimes-equivocal authorship, self-annotations also evoke two different discourse traditions at the same time. On the one hand, authorial annotations still conjure up the scholarly, xenographic model and thus raise certain expectations of what a note may (and may not) do. Hence, even when reading self-annotations, the knowledge about the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation is (potentially) always at the

27 For the letter in which Pope invites Warburton to become his co-annotator, see Pope, *Corr.* 4: 427–28. Warburton's notes on Pope's works have not found many admirers among contemporary readers and later scholars (cf. Evans 158–64, 174–77; Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 175; 188–194; Nichol xxxiv–xxxv). Byron was not a fan of Warburton's notes either. In a letter to Octavius Gilchrist, he comments: "[h]itherto [Pope] has only been edited by his enemies or by Warburton who was a polemical parson and as fit to edite [sic] Pope as Pope to preach in Gloucester Cathedral. – The Attorney-bishop did him no good – & Warton & Bowles have done him harm" (*BLJ* 8: 201). For a positive modern evaluation of Warburton's notes, see Knapp *passim*.

28 It is also possible that Swift and a few of Pope's other friends contributed some of the notes to the *Dunciad*s, without ever having been identified as their authors. In a letter from 28 June 1728, Pope requests Swift to write a few annotations for the *Dunciad Variorum* (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 2: 503). The "Letter to the Publisher", which is prefixed to the *Dunciad*s from 1729 onwards, likewise claims that the notes are by different authors, but it is impossible to assess the veracity of this statement (cf. *Dunciad* 31).

29 In the present context, I will treat as self-annotations notes that were definitely written by Pope and Byron, *and* such as were possibly written by someone else as long as these (1) were written at the behest of Pope and Byron and were authorised by them to be published among their self-annotations, and (2) did not (at least in the first edition(s) of a work) draw attention to the fact that they were actually written by someone else. In other words, notes that, to a work's first readers, were plausibly presented as self-annotations will be analysed as such; if relevant, their authorship will be briefly commented on. Annotations composed by the author and jokingly attributed to a fictional character (e.g. Scriblerus) or a real person (e.g. Richard Bentley) will also be discussed as self-annotations, though the implications of their feigned authorship will also be analysed (see chapter 2.3).

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back of readers' minds. On the other hand, readers are aware that, due to their completely different relationship to the annotated text and its author, self-annotations do not necessarily fulfil the same functions as editorial notes and, hence, are not governed by the same conventions as they are. Thus, readers of authorial notes have the double awareness that these notes imitate the discourse tradition of xenographic notes while at the same time constituting a separate discourse tradition to which the conventions of factuality, unambiguousness, and direct relevance with respect to the annotated lemmata do not necessarily apply.

As shown in the examples from Pope and Byron above, self-annotations usually follow a specific pattern: (1) they explicitly or implicitly evoke one or more functions that a xenographic note would fulfil and then (2) use various textual strategies in order to (3) either indeed accomplish these functions or to actually perform very different ones. Pope's note quoted above, for example, evokes the xenographic function of explanation (here: identifying an allusion), uses the strategy of ironic and misleading disambiguation, and thereby achieves various satirical aims. As we will see in the course of this study, the degree to which a specific self-annotation still adheres to the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation can vary greatly: some authorial notes follow them so closely that they can be mistaken for those of a scholarly editor, while others overtly transform, flout, and subvert them.

As the examples drawn from *Don Juan* and the *Dunciad*s above have shown, it would be overly simplistic to just call these latter kinds of authorial notes 'failed' annotations or parodies of editorial annotations. Though making fun of the conventions of xenographic annotations is a common *strategy* in self-annotations, the main *function* of such apparently bungled notes is only rarely to simply parody scholarly notes. In other words, in self-annotations, the subversion of the discourse conventions of xenographic notes is generally a means to an end, not an end by itself.[30]

Any given self-annotation may have *intratextual* as well as *socio-pragmatic* functions. The former refers to how a note influences the meaning of the annotated passage and sometimes even the text as a whole. It can straightforwardly explain and support the meaning, but more often alters, expands, or even contradicts it. The socio-pragmatic functions are concerned with how the annotation interacts with the world outside the text – serving to portray the author

30 For a prominent exception, see Thémiseul de Saint-Hyacinthe's *Le chef d'œuvre d'un inconnu* (1714), the annotations of which serve almost no other aim but to parody xenographic notes. For a discussion of its possible influence on the *Dunciad*s, see p. 65 below.

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in a certain light, enacting his/her relationship with the public, and fulfilling practical purposes like flattering patrons and insulting enemies. In the Byron example above, the intratextual and the socio-pragmatic functions are closely intertwined. With regard to the former, the note points readers to the presence of a topical allusion within the text, thereby emphasising and expanding the meaning of the annotated passage. The socio-pragmatic functions of the annotation are to comment on the high-society marriage market as well as on the ephemerality of gossip, to establish a shared horizon of understanding with contemporary readers, to tease future audiences about their alleged inability to make sense of the passage, and, thereby, to still give them a hint that there is indeed an allusion that can be deciphered provided that they do the necessary research.

While in this specific note all of the functions complement one another, there are also many annotations in which the functions are unrelated or in which they even contradict each other. The latter is the case in the example drawn from Pope's *Dunciad*s which partly stresses the innocence of the annotated passage but which, by its very silence on the political allusion, also ironically confirms that the lines have a much more dangerous meaning. A note may also have different functions for different readerships (see esp. chapters 2.2.2.3 and 3.2.2). The 'double-directedness' of self-annotations at the text and the world outside the text, and the various (sometimes contradictory) functions that a note can fulfil simultaneously add even more ambiguities to this far from unequivocal discourse convention.

To conclude, in xenographic annotations, ambiguity is a bug; in authorial ones, it is a defining feature. Xenographic annotations are usually unambiguous in themselves and strive to determine or at least to record possible meaning(s); authorial ones are frequently ambiguous and often serve to further proliferate meanings.[31] Self-annotations set out by invoking one or more of the functions

31 This is also observed by Slights: "While the announced and often achieved effect of the annotating procedure is to simplify, often by offering an epitome of the text, and sometimes by announcing one of the possible senses of the text as the authorized version, in other cases the annotations provide perspectives on the text that greatly complicate and in some cases radically destabilize it" (Slights, *Managing Readers* 19–20). Venturi follows a similar line of thought: "Self-commentaries combine authenticity with ambiguity, and thus profoundly differ in their rationale from standard commentaries as we understand them today. Due to the author's privileged perspective on their own writing, they offer revealing insights and inevitably influence the work's subsequent reading and interpretation. However, authorial commentaries may serve more than one purpose, easily veering off into self-praise, apologia, or retraction and thus ascribing a skewed meaning to the primary text or superimposing an entirely new articulation" (Venturi, "Introduction" 3).

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of editorial annotation. They then use a multitude of textual strategies to fulfil, transform, or subvert these functions for ulterior aims, thereby interacting both with the annotated text and the world outside it. These strategies and the aesthetic, satirical, social, etc. purposes for which they are used – the *how* and the *why* of self-annotation – are at the heart of this study which sets out to provide a systematic overview of Pope's and Byron's practices of self-annotation (for more details on the focus of this book, see chapter 1.5.3).

1.3 Existing Attempts at Categorising Self-Annotations

Since the publication of Genette's pioneering *Seuils*, a considerable number of studies have stressed the manifold ways in which authors' annotations interact with, and contribute to, the meaning(s) of their texts.[32] Yet, so far only a handful of them have attempted to comprehensively categorise the notes of individual writers, literary movements, or even of self-annotated literature as a whole. Such categorisations, however, are essential for gaining insights into the immense (and perhaps surprising) diversity of self-annotations and for comparing the uses of authorial notes across different authors, genres, and times. Furthermore, even the existing handful of categorisations cannot (for the most

32 For monographs providing a diachronic and/or international overview of practices of (self-)annotation, see Pfersmann, *Séditions infrapaginales*; Grafton, *The Footnote*; Zerby, *The Devil's Details*; Eckstein, *Fussnoten*; and Stang, *Einleitung – Fußnote – Kommentar*.

For works concerned with a specific period, author, or work, see A. Watson, *Romantic Marginality*; Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics in British Romantic-Period Literature*; Edson (ed.), *Annotation in Eighteenth-Century Poetry*; Roush, *Hermes' Lyre: Italian Poetic Self-Commentary from Dante to Tommaso Campanella*; Séité, *Du livre au lire*; Wirth, *Die Geburt des Autors aus dem Geist der Herausgeberfiktion*; Zubarik, *Die Strategie(n) der Fussnote im gegenwärtigen Roman*; Cronk et al. (eds.), *Les notes de Voltaire*; Corsaro and Procaccioli (eds.), *Cum notibusse et comentaribusse*; and Venturi (ed.), *Self-Commentary in Early Modern European Literature, 1400–1700*.

For edited volumes containing chapters on various topics relating to (self-)annotation that are not restricted to a certain time or author, see Barney, *Annotation and Its Texts*; Colin, *La note d'autorité*; Volpilhac-Auger, *Le texte et son commentaire*; Peron, *L'autocommento*; Bray et al., *Ma(r)king the Text*; Metz and Zubarik, *Am Rande bemerkt*; Metz and Zubarik, *Den Rahmen sprengen*; Dürrenmatt and Pfersmann, *L'espace de la note*; C. Jacob, *Le livre annoté;* and Bessire, *L'écrivain éditeur.*

Some of these works are also partly concerned with xenographic annotations, or, in the cases of Venturi and Peron, adopt a definition of self-commentary that goes beyond self-annotation in the narrow sense in which I am using the term in this book (see p. xxi above). For further secondary sources on self-annotated works, see the 'External Appendix' (http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434).

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part) fully do justice to the complexity of the self-annotations that they are covering.[33]

As one of the few attempts to classify self-annotations, Ottavio Besomi's article "L'autocommento nella *Secchia rapita*" is concerned with the notes in Alessandro Tassoni's famous mock-epic – a work that was well-known to Pope (see p. 62 below). Besomi's essay, however, is mainly concerned with categorising the pieces of information that the notes provide (i.e. what kind of knowledge do they explicitly contain?) rather than the functions that these notes serve (i.e. what do the notes do to the meaning of the work and the author's interaction with the world outside the text?).[34] Furthermore, Besomi's categorisation partly blurs the line between the *purposes* of the notes and the textual *strategies* employed in them (e.g. 'direct addresses to the reader').

William Slights in "The Edifying Margins of Renaissance English Books" proposes fifteen functions of marginal notes, regardless of whether they are authorial or xenographic.[35] He also acknowledges that a note often does not serve only one of these functions but that "many of the more significant contributions of marginalia to particular texts result from subtle combinations of these purposes" (686–87). Despite the helpfulness of Slight's list for gaining an overview of the uses of early modern marginalia, I have indicated above why it is problematic to discuss authorial and xenographic notes under the same heading. The very same note, e.g. 'This is nonsense' (which, in Slights's terminology, might be categorised as 'correction' or as 'parody'), can have different

33 The texts that I will discuss in this subchapter all use different numbering systems for their categorisations, e.g. "A.1.a" or "1.I.i". For simplicity's sake, I will standardise them all to 1, or 1.1, or 1.1.1, and so on.

34 Besomi differentiates between metalinguistic notes (e.g. about dialect words, proverbs, or morphology) and metadiegetic notes. The latter are further subdivided into (1) addresses to the readers (e.g. pointing them to further sources or forestalling misinterpretations), (2) metanarrative comments (e.g. explaining stylistic choices or the inclusion of anachronisms and personal experience), (3) explanations (e.g. of names, places, customs), (4) textual variants, and (5) the identification of literary references (cf. Besomi, "L'autocommento" 54–55).

35 The purposes that he identifies are (1) amplification ("adding detail peripheral to the text", e.g. examples or analogies), (2) annotation (providing references), (3) appropriation ("co-opting a text for purposes not explicitly intended by its author"), (4) correction (either of the author or of others' interpretations of the text), (5) emphasis, (6) evaluation, (7) exhortation ("encouraging the reader to take to heart the author's message"), (8) explication (clarifying meaning), (9) justification ("defending the author against his detractors"), (10) organisation ("dividing the text into parts"), (11) parody ("mocking the tone or substance of the text"), (12) pre-emption (filling the margins to prevent handwritten comments), (13) rhetorical glossing (identifying rhetoric figures), (14) simplification, and (15) translation (Slights, "Edifying Margins" 685–86).

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functions depending on whether it was written by the author of the annotated text or by someone else. In the case of an authorial annotation, readers would have to come to terms with the apparent self-contradiction and can read it, among other things, as an isolated case of playful self-irony, later repentance for one's youthful writings, or a sign that the annotated text as a whole should not be taken seriously. If the same note was written by someone else (e.g. an editor), readers can, theoretically, just dismiss the note as subjective and unfounded, with no bearing on the annotated text whatsoever.

Maxine Hancock, in her study of Bunyan's marginal notes, identifies four functions and two effects of self-annotation. The functions are "to refer, to index, to interpret, and to generalize" (Hancock 123). Like Slights, Hancock stresses that

> some of the most complex and interesting interactions between marginal notes and narrative text occur when marginal notes function in more than one way at a time, as when reference notes offer interpretation. (Hancock 133)

The effects of authorial marginal notes can be divided into "text-reflexive", i.e. notes that "modify, intensify or ameliorate the effect" of the annotated passage, and "text-extensive", i.e. notes that "invite the reader's attention to move beyond the narrative" (Hancock 123). Text-reflexive annotations are hence concerned with intratextual patterns and the interpretation of the text, while text-extensive notes are related to signification, representation, and intertextuality (cf. Hancock 134). Hancock aptly shows that even brief marginal notes often serve a number of different purposes, and she likewise recognises the double-directedness towards the text and the world outside the text that characterises annotations. Nevertheless, she does not mention that notes can also be employed for socio-pragmatic functions. The prevalence and importance of such 'social' annotations will be shown in the course of the present study.

Andréas Pfersmann's article "Éléments pour une approche typologique des notes infrapaginales" offers six main functions of self-annotations in general, without focussing on a specific author or genre (cf. Pfersmann 66–88).[36]

36 These functions are: (1) indicating sources, (2) quoting sources, (3) referring to other passages within the same work, (4) naming variants, (5) containing a part, or the entirety, of the narrative of a work (e.g. in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*), and (6) commenting. The last category is further divided into (6.1) comments that refer to the text, (6.2) comments that refer to the world, and (6.3) comments that refer to the author. These are again subcategorised into (6.1.1) word explanations, (6.1.2) explanations of allusions, (6.1.3) explanations of historical references, (6.1.4) comments on the personages of the text, e.g. their actions and thoughts, (6.1.5) aesthetic comments, (6.2.1) showing the link between the text and current political circumstances, (6.2.2) digressions on social issues or explicit calls for social

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These categories are again comprised of many subcategories. Even though Pfersmann's approach takes an important step in stressing the social and 'practical' dimension of self-annotation, it is still mainly concerned with categorising the information that is *explicitly* given in a note, thereby neglecting cases in which one or more functions are *implicitly* fulfilled by the apparent performance of another. For instance, a note may – on the surface – be used to merely inform readers about the presence of an allusion (*information*), but this information may – depending on the context – be used to reinforce the meaning of the work or, by contrast, to undermine it (*function*).

Lastly, in his study of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Yannick Séité lists nine different functions of self-annotations in this novel.[37] Later in his book, he also suggests a second way of categorising the annotations in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, this time with more focus on the socio-pragmatic aspect of the notes and the occasional antagonism between the notes and the main text.[38] Séité's proposal of two different models indicates how difficult it is to systematise the functions of self-annotations. The complexity of authorial notes, which often pretend to do one thing while fulfilling many different functions in addition to, or even instead of, their alleged aim, is also acknowledged by Séité. Referring to his first categorisation (pp. 292–93), he points out that it cannot account for the actual intricacy of self-annotations:

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change, (6.2.3) notes that anticipate readers' objections, (6.3.1) notes in which we receive personal information about the author, and (6.3.2) dialogic notes, which strive to create a phatic relationship between author and reader.

37 He lists: (1) explaining facts about Clarens, (2) explaining language, (3) explaining cultural references, (4) correcting formal features, (5) internal references, (6) approving of the ideas of a person, (7) approving of the actions, language, or tone of a person, (8) disapproving of the ideas of a person, and (8) disapproving of the actions, language, or tone of a person (cf. Séité 292–93).

38 He names: (1) notes that facilitate reading, including (1.1) notes containing 'editorial' information about 'missing letters' or elucidations of (fictional) events that are alluded to but not explained in the letters; (1.2) explanatory notes about (1.2.1) Swiss geography and (1.2.2) language and culture; (1.3) notes that adopt a facetious tone which seems to subvert the sentimental main text; (2) notes that criticise or approve, including (2.1) notes addressed to real people, either (2.1.1) praising them or (2.1.2) attacking them; (2.2) metaleptic annotations addressing readers; (2.3) digressive notes used either to provide enriching information for readers' instruction or to prevent them from becoming too involved in the sentimentalism of the letters; (2.4) notes that allow the inclusion of a narratorial voice otherwise excluded from an epistolary novel; (2.5) philosophical notes, including (2.5.1) discussions with an implicit reader, (2.5.2) notes that frame the letters in such a way as to turn the novel into a philosophical work, (2.5.3), notes that praise the characters in the novel, and (2.5.3) notes that criticise them (cf. Séité 299–350).

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> [I]l est une ultime caractéristique des notes de *La Nouvelle Héloïse* dont le tableau ne rend pas compte: la complexité de leur structure; le fait que, pour beaucoup d'entre elles, elles ne remplissent pas une et une seule fonction, et, plus encore, ne se limitent pas à un seul effet mais en visent bien souvent plusieurs. […] [S]i le but apparent d'une note est peut être bel et bien à chercher du côté d'un désir de faire passer un savoir, son *effet*, voire son but réel, peut être d'un tout autre ordre. (Séité 297; 323, original emphasis)[39]

Even though this is an extremely important insight, Séité's book overstates the degree of Rousseau's uniqueness and innovation. For instance, he asserts that Rousseau was the inventor of the complex note and that he was the first and maybe only author to use self-annotations to address personal messages to a small group of insiders rather than to his whole readership (cf. Séité 298; 313). By contrast, I wish to argue that self-annotations *in general* exhibit a considerable degree of complexity (albeit not always to the same extent as those in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*) and that Pope's and Byron's are among the most intricate examples of the discourse tradition of self-annotations. Furthermore, similar to Besomi, Séité mixes categories: some of his criteria refer to the *explicit information* contained in the notes (e.g. information about Switzerland), some to the *textual strategies* (e.g. annotations that tonally clash with the text), and some to actual *functions* (e.g. preventing readers from becoming too invested in the sentimental letters).

As already indicated, the five approaches just outlined suffer from several drawbacks. Besomi and Pfersmann mainly focus on the information that is explicitly given in an annotation rather than its actual functions, thereby implicitly evaluating self-annotations according to the criteria of xenographic notes. Likewise, in combining authorial and editorial annotations in the same scheme, Slights does not consider the fundamental differences between these two discourse traditions. Slights, Hancock, and Séité recognise that a single authorial note can serve many different functions, but none of them 'translate' this insight into a categorisation that considers the complexity of self-annotations, nor do they investigate *why* and *how* authorial annotations lend themselves so well to this multifunctionality.

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39 "There is one ultimate characteristic of the notes in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* that the table [i.e. the categorisation] does not take into account: the complexity of their structure, the fact that most of them do not fulfil one single function and, what is more, do not limit themselves to one single effect but often strive to achieve more. […] [I]f the apparent aim of a note is maybe indeed the desire to impart knowledge, its *effect*, i.e. its real aim, can be of a very different kind" (Séité 297; 323, original emphasis, my translation). The fact that even the (apparently) most simple note can have many different functions is also mentioned by Sveva Frigerio (cf. Frigerio 282–83).

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The question is, how can one satisfactorily categorise something that is intriguing precisely *because* it resists categorisation? The most promising approach seems to be to analyse the textual strategies that lead to the multi-functionality of self-annotations and to describe patterns of functions and strategies that frequently co-occur. I have therefore chosen a tripartite categorisation in this study. First, I sort Pope's and Byron's self-annotations according to the function(s) of xenographic annotation that they appear to mimic (e.g. explanatory notes, emendatory notes, or evaluative notes). Then, I structure these notes depending on the main textual strategy (or strategies) employed in them (e.g. using manipulated quotes or employing various fictional annotator personas). Lastly, I categorise these annotations again into the main functions that are served by these strategies (e.g. both reinforcing and disowning the attack of a passage). This may lead, for instance, to the investigation of Pope's self-annotations that mimic both emendatory and interpretative xenographic notes (see chapter 2.3). In this specific case, only one main strategy is employed, namely the attribution of these notes to two annotatorial personas – Bentley and Scriblerus. The functions that these notes serve are, first, to ambiguate the two personas themselves and, second, to use the annotations signed by these 'annotators' to ambiguate both Pope's *Dunciad*s and his public image as a whole. This tripartite categorisation – mimicked function(s), textual strategies, actual function(s) – frequently results in overlaps and the repeated mention of a single function in various contexts. However, such repetitions are useful in that they show, for example, when an author is especially preoccupied with a certain function and when vastly different textual strategies serve the same function.

Pfersmann's and Slight's categorisations of the functions of (self-)annotation derive from a large sample of vastly different texts, while Besomi, Hancock, and Séité all focus on one writer and work, respectively. This makes it hard to use either of these approaches for the aim of learning more about the similarities and differences of authorial notes from different authors, genres, and periods. Furthermore, neither method can fully grasp how variegated practices of self-annotation actually were (and still are) – the former only outlining what this discourse tradition can do *in general* and the latter showing what one author does but not how this author's self-annotations differ from those of his contemporaries. For this reason, the present analysis focuses on two writers, Pope and Byron, and embeds their approaches to authorial annotation in the context of the (self-)annotatorial practices of their respective ages. This will, of course, still be insufficient for a comprehensive overview of all the strategies and functions of the discourse tradition of self-annotations as a whole (i.e. irrespective of author, time, or genre). However, the study of these authors will

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show that even in a case in which two writers wrote in the same language and lived merely one hundred years apart, were often preoccupied with the same genre (satire), and in which one saw the other as his great idol and model, their notes vastly differ from one another, thus attesting to the multifariousness of the discourse tradition of self-annotation. Furthermore, the analysis of their two very dissimilar approaches to self-annotation will allow me to develop broader analytic categories (e.g. the degree to which the notes subvert the main text) that can be employed for comparing annotatorial practices of different authors, genres, and periods.

The close readings of Pope's and Byron's notes will be guided by two interconnected theoretical frameworks: the conceptualisation of self-annotation as a discourse tradition which is still informed by xenographic annotations but strategically deviates from its conventions in a multitude of ways (see above), and a fine-grained approach to the phenomenon of ambiguity.

1.4 Self-Annotations and Ambiguity

Ambiguity relates to self-annotation in four ways: (1) as a characteristic of this discourse tradition as a whole, (2) as a starting point for self-annotations, (3) as a strategy in them, and (4) as an outcome of them. These four aspects are located on conceptually different levels. The first point has been discussed above and refers to the highly ambiguous enunciatory, temporal, (para)textual, and factual status of self-annotations, their sometimes-equivocal authorship, and their ambiguous relationship with the conventions of xenographic annotations. Here, ambiguity appears as an inherent property of a discourse tradition. An individual author does not *produce* this ambiguity but rather employs (and thus: perpetuates) an already-existing ambiguity. The second aspect points to the fact that annotations (be they authorial or xenographic) often react to ambiguities within the annotated text; they take them as a starting point for explanation, interpretation, disambiguation but also – in the case of self-annotation – further ambiguation. In this case, ambiguity is a feature of the annotated text; it is created by the author and can be located in a single word or passage but also in a work in its entirety. Thirdly, self-annotations often use textual strategies that involve ambiguity, e.g. irony, addressing different readerships, performing two contradictory functions at once, proposing mutually exclusive interpretations, etc. Here, ambiguity – or, rather, ambiguation – is a rhetorical and literary device employed for a specific aim. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, based on the three former aspects, self-annotations create yet further ambiguities. These ambiguities can be relevant on a local level (i.e.

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with respect to the annotated passage) but also on a global level by complicating how we interpret the whole annotated text and even an author's entire œuvre and public image. Thus, ambiguity as an *outcome* of self-annotation touches on many different conceptual levels: it can raise questions about the meaning of a single word in a text; complicate our notion of a work's genre, tone, and factuality; and even have far-reaching social implications (e.g. when an author uses a facetious note to cast doubt on his usually sombre or morally impeccable self-presentation).

These four aspects taken together can show how different ambiguities located on different conceptual levels may interact with one another. For instance, the very fact that a note is an authorial instead of a xenographic one raises the question of who exactly is speaking in it – is it the real-life author or a fictional annotator persona whose opinion might be ridiculed by the author? This note might then be used to address an ambiguity in the text and offer an elucidation. The enunciatory ambiguity of the note might be employed by the author to ambiguate the irony or seriousness of the note – is the elucidation to be taken as a serious explanation by the author or as a nonsensical proposal by a fictional persona that the author ironises? This ambiguity of the note, then, ambiguates the annotated text by giving rise to various interpretations of the annotated passage, which, in turn, may raise questions about the author's philosophical and political outlook. (For concrete examples of such cases, see chapter 2.3.)

In order to be able to describe these interrelations between the status of a note, its starting point in the main text, the strategies it uses, and the outcomes it produces, a framework is needed that is detailed enough to precisely describe why a certain textual phenomenon has different meanings, and what these different meanings are. At the same time, this framework has to be flexible enough to be applicable to ambiguity phenomena on different conceptual levels and of different sizes (ranging from a morpheme to a whole discourse tradition) and to cases in which the multiple meanings of one part of the text have ramifications for a completely different part of the text, thereby ambiguating it as well. This framework is based on the approach to ambiguity developed by the Tübingen Research Training Group "Ambiguity: Production and Perception".[40]

40 For this framework, see especially Winter-Froemel and Zirker, "Ambiguity in Speaker-Hearer-Interaction"; Bauer et al., "Dimensionen der Ambiguität"; and S. Winkler, "Exploring Ambiguity and the Ambiguity Model from a Transdisciplinary Perspective".

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1.4.1 *Ambiguity – Indeterminacy – Underspecification – Ambivalence*

In this context, ambiguity is understood as the "co-existence of two or more meanings" which have to be clearly distinct from one another ("Conceptual Framework"; cf. also Winter-Froemel and Zirker 285). Whereas some approaches argue that the two or more possible meanings of an ambiguous utterance have to be incompatible (cf. Rimmon 16), the Tübingen project contends that the distinct meanings do not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive (cf. Winter-Froemel 70–72; Bauer et al. 27). For instance, the example from Byron's *Don Juan* discussed above both serves to strengthen his ties with contemporary readers and to make a satirical point about the high-society marriage market. These two meanings of the annotation (reader-interaction and satirical attack) coexist and are clearly distinct from each other, but they by no means preclude one another.

In order to be able to precisely describe ambiguous phenomena, it is necessary to clearly differentiate the concept from notions such as indeterminacy, underspecification, and ambivalence.[41] A sentence is "indeterminate or unspecified, if it is definitely true or false, but could be made more specific" (Poesio 161n1). The utterance 'I saw the pony grazing on the meadow', for instance, is indeterminate with respect to the breed and colour of the pony, the size of the meadow, etc. What is important is that "these additional facts do not affect the truth value of the sentence" (Poesio 161n). By contrast, underspecified utterances "may have different truth values depending on the way the facts are 'filled in'" (Poesio 161n). Satirists (including Pope and Byron) often play with underspecification, e.g. stating that 'some foreign secretaries are real idiots', where the expression 'foreign secretaries' is not ambiguous as to its meaning but underspecified with respect to its potential referent(s).[42]

41 Vagueness is another concept related to, but by no means identical with, ambiguity. Since vagueness will not play a role in any of my analyses, it will here only be mentioned very briefly. "Ambiguous expressions have more than one distinct meaning; vague expressions have a single meaning that cannot be characterized precisely" (Wasow 32). Vague expressions are usually terms that are 'relative' or that have a "borderline-area of semantic indefiniteness" (Pinkal 185). Examples of vague expressions include colours (where exactly do we draw the line between blue and green?) and scalar adjectives (where exactly do we draw the line between cheap and expensive?).

42 Also see the example provided by Adam Sennet: an utterance may fail "to specify some detail without thereby being ambiguous with respect to that detail. […] [I]f I tell you that I am going to visit my aunt, I underspecify whether it is my mother's sister or my father's sister whom I am going to go visit. Nothing follows about the univocality or ambiguity of 'aunt'. It simply means 'aunt' is true of things that are female siblings of your parent" (Sennet n. pag.).

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While ambiguity, indeterminacy, and underspecification are properties of an utterance, ambivalence is a psychological state denoting the "simultaneous occurrence of incompatible emotions, cognitions or intentions in a person" (Bross and Ziegler 122).[43] There is, however, a strong connection between ambiguity and ambivalence in that an ambiguous statement can be used to express ambivalence (cf. Bauer, "Ambiguity and Ambivalence" 144). For example, the ambiguity that is created when a facetious note is appended to a (seemingly) serious passage may be employed to hint at a certain ambivalence towards the issue that is being described in the annotated passage (see chapter 3.2.1.2).

1.4.2 *Different Research Questions – Different Concepts of Ambiguity*

The definition of ambiguity as the co-existence of two or more clearly distinct but not mutually exclusive meanings steers a middle course between very broad notions of ambiguity (e.g. by William Empson, Roman Jakobson, and Christoph Bode) and very narrow ones (e.g. by Shlomith Rimmon). Empson's classification of ambiguity phenomena is not concerned with the exact textual strategies that react to, employ, and result in ambiguity (which is my concern) but with the different relations in which the meanings of a textual element can stand to each other as well as with what ambiguity suggests about the author's (and, to some extent, the reader's) state of mind.[44] By partly moving away from the notion of ambiguity as a textual phenomenon and locating it, at least to some extent, in the psyche of the author ("indecision", "intention"), Empson diverts attention away from the concrete properties in an utterance that make this utterance ambiguous and opens the way for speculations that are not

43 For a more detailed study of ambivalence (and how it can be differentiated from ambiguity), see Bauer et al., *Ambivalenz in Sprache, Literatur und Kunst*. For Pope and ambivalence, see Emrys D. Jones, "An Appetite for Ambivalence".

44 Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* famously defines ambiguity as "any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language" (Empson 1) and continues to state that "'[a]mbiguity' itself can mean an indecision as to what you mean, an intention to mean several things, a probability that one or both of the things has been meant, and the fact that a statement has several meanings" (Empson 5–6). Thus, Empson subsumes concepts like vagueness and indeterminacy under the heading of ambiguity, thereby further diluting the analytical *Trennschärfe*, i.e. discriminatory power, of the concept (cf. Potysch 185–86).

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necessarily grounded in the text. Jakobson[45] and Bode[46] even go a step further in their approaches to ambiguity. For them, ambiguity is a property of literature in general. This concept of ambiguity – even though it raises intriguing questions about the nature of literariness – is unsuited for a close analysis of ambiguity as a trait of specific textual phenomena (cf. Mittelbach 14). In other words, if we perceive all literary texts as ambiguous in their entirety, we run the risk of overlooking those elements in a text that can be called 'ambiguous' in the narrower sense of the word, neither examining what exactly it is that makes them ambiguous (locally) nor what role their ambiguity plays for the meaning of the text as a whole (globally). For instance, if we argue that Pope's *Dunciad*s are ambiguous because they are works of literature, attention is diverted away from instances in which *specific* aspects of the texts can be (and have been) interpreted in different ways, e.g. the editorial persona 'Scriblerus', who has been both read as a helpful interpreter and an inept fool (see chapter 2.3.1).

At the other end of the spectrum, we find Shlomith Rimmon's narrow concept of narrative ambiguity which exclusively deals with ambiguity as a

45 In his essay "Linguistics and Poetics", Jakobson argues that literary texts are always ambiguous because they are primarily characterised by the poetic function of language (which renders them self-referential) without, however, losing their referential function altogether: "Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry. […] Not only the message itself but also its addresser and addressee become ambiguous. […] The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous. The double-sensed message finds correspondence in a split addresser, in a split addressee, and besides in a split reference" (Jakobson 370–71). By "split addresser" and "split addressee", Jakobson refers to the fact that in literary texts there is communication on the internal level (characters communicating with each other) and on the external level (the author communicating with readers).

46 Bode agrees with Jakobson and likewise argues that what makes poetic language ambiguous is the fact that it is self-referential without completely losing its referential function and concludes: "*Poetic language* […] *is always ambiguous language*" and that "the poetic text [is] *essentially* ambiguous" (Bode, *Ästhetik der Ambiguität* 53; 71, my translation, original emphasis). The original German reads: "[*p*]*oetische Sprache* […] *ist immer mehrdeutige Sprache*" and "der poetische Text [ist] *essentiell* ambig" (original emphasis). Bode uses the term 'poetic language' with reference to Jakobson's poetic function, with its strong emphasis on self-referentiality. This inherent ambiguity of language is what Bode calls "Ambiguity Mark I" (cf. Bode, "Aesthetics of Ambiguity" 75). He goes on to argue that what makes modernist literature (which is the focus of his study) especially ambiguous is its attempt to become almost exclusively self-referential and not restrained by considerations of mimesis, literary conventions, or the ordinary, every-day meaning of words (cf. 77–78). This is what he terms "Ambiguity Mark II". For an excellent discussion of Bode's concept of ambiguity, see Mittelbach 10–14.

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property of a very limited number of utterances and literary works. She argues that ambiguity is a "'conjunction' of exclusive disjuncts", explaining that exclusive disjuncts are the

> 'finalized hypotheses' (i.e., the hypotheses the reader has attained at the end of the reading process), and their conjunction is the most abstract equivalent of the coexistence of two mutually exclusive fabulas in one sjuzhet. (Rimmon-Kenan, "Ambiguity and Narrative Levels" 21)

An example from her study *The Concept of Ambiguity* is that in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* readers can either arrive at the finalised hypothesis 'there are ghosts at Bligh' or at the finalised hypothesis 'there are no ghosts at Bligh'. These two interpretations are brought about by "two techniques, the balance of singly directed clues and the presence of doubly directed ones", meaning that throughout the text we can find both clues that unambiguously suggest one of these interpretations as well as clues that are ambiguous and that can be read as pointing to either interpretation (Rimmon, *The Concept of Ambiguity* 83).[47] The result is what Rimmon terms "narrative ambiguity":

> When the two hypotheses are mutually exclusive, and yet each is equally coherent, equally consistent, equally plenary and convincing, so that we cannot choose between them, we are confronted with narrative ambiguity. (Rimmon 10)

The importance of "mutual exclusiveness" for her concept of ambiguity is stressed numerous times throughout Rimmon's book. For instance, she explains that

> [a]mbiguity differs from double or multiple meaning in that its component alternatives cannot both be true, nor can they be subsumed in a larger unit which they conjoin to create or in which they are reconciled and integrated. Therefore 'double meaning' or 'multiple meaning' do not call for choice, while 'ambiguity' simultaneously calls for choice and makes it impossible. (Rimmon 14)

Rimmon's narrow concept of ambiguity is problematic insofar as it is mainly concerned with global ambiguities – i.e. ambiguities that are relevant for, and never resolved throughout, the text as a whole (cf. Münkler 127; Ebert 16) – and with ambiguity as the prime *aim* of a text, not with ambiguity as a *strategy* to achieve other aims. True, she acknowledges that 'doubly directed clues'

47 Earlier in the book, she clarifies that, rather than always having only two meanings, "an ambiguous expression has two *or more* distinct meanings operating in the given context" (Rimmon 17, my emphasis).

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(i.e. local ambiguities that pertain to one word, sentence, or paragraph) have a central role in bringing about the global ambiguity of a text. Nevertheless, she argues that these smaller elements can never be "subsumed in a larger unit which they conjoin to create or in which they are reconciled and integrated" (Rimmon 14) and emphasises that there is no ambiguity if the different meanings "operate together, modify and enrich each other" (23). Thus, for Rimmon, local ambiguities can never contribute to the meaning of a text other than by rendering it ambiguous in its entirety. Even though this is not explicitly stated in her book, her approach implies that it is not really worthwhile to analyse local ambiguities as ambiguous elements in their own right but only with reference to the ambiguity of the text as a whole. For Rimmon, hence, a close-reading approach to ambiguity is primarily concerned with analysing how exactly global ambiguity is produced, not with how ambiguity (be it global or local) reinforces certain other themes or concerns in the work at hand (e.g. an author's self-presentation as both moral satirist and as immoral but witty libeller). In her view, ambiguity is an aim, not a strategy to achieve other aims. Rimmon's analysis usually runs along the lines of 'in this text the following strategies are used to produce a global ambiguity with respect to the question …', rather than 'in this text the following ambiguities are used to draw attention to … or to contribute to the satire on …'. Rimmon's approach to ambiguity is thus not designed to investigate how exactly texts employ ambiguities to generate meanings that go beyond mere either/or questions.

The approaches to ambiguity of Empson, Jakobson, and Bode on the one hand and Rimmon on the other are not suited for the objectives that I am pursuing in this study: Empson is concerned both with classifying the relationships between the different possible meanings of a textual element and with what the presence of different meanings in a text suggests about the author's state of mind; Jakobson and Bode use a very broad concept of ambiguity in order to describe how literary texts differ from other texts and, in the case of Bode, how modern texts (i.e. after 1900) differ from earlier texts. And Rimmon, after all, is concerned with works that revolve around the very fact that they give rise to two or more mutually exclusive interpretations, i.e. with ambiguity as an objective rather than a strategy of literary texts.

1.4.3 *Analysing Self-Annotation Through Ambiguity & Ambiguity Through Self-Annotation*

For the purposes of the present study, it is important to describe how exactly ambiguity is created and for which purposes it is used. Both of these aspects are covered by the Tübingen model of ambiguity which covers a great number of parameters that are indispensable for an in-depth analysis of different

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ambiguity phenomena (for an overview, see Winter-Froemel and Zirker *passim*; and S. Winkler, "Exploring Ambiguity" *passim*).

On the most basic level, one can distinguish between ambiguities in the language system and ambiguities in concrete utterances (cf. Winter-Froemel and Zirker 286). The first "represent a characteristic of the abstract linguistic items [...] which may – or may not – materialize in human communication" (286). In actual communication, these ambiguities are usually not even noticed because they are disambiguated by context (cf. 286). For instance, the word 'bat' is ambiguous in the language system and can either refer to an animal or to an implement used in baseball. However, if a baseball coach were to say 'we have a game tomorrow, so don't forget your bat again', the potential ambiguity of 'bat' would, most likely, not be noticed because the context disambiguates the word. Nevertheless, one of the players might joke: 'I didn't forget it; it flew to Transylvania'. In this case, the ambiguity in the language system would be actualised in discourse. Yet, ambiguity in concrete utterances does not always rely on ambiguities in the language system. For example, the sentence 'while you were sleeping, I cleaned the whole flat' is not ambiguous in the language system. Nevertheless, it is ambiguous because it can be interpreted either as mere statement or as a reproach (cf. 287–88). In a similar vein, self-annotations can, among other things, (1) react to an element in the main text that is ambiguous in the language system but not in this concrete utterance and draw attention to/actualise its ambiguity, (2) address an element in the main text that might be read as ambiguous (either in the language system or in this concrete utterance) and in some way react to its ambiguity (e.g. by disambiguating it), and (3) give rise to ambiguities that do not exist in the language system at all but depend on context.

In the 'bat' example above, the coach (who unintentionally utters something ambiguous) and the player (who deliberately reacts to an ambiguous utterance) epitomise two further aspects: (1) the production and the perception side of ambiguity and (2) the difference between strategic and non-strategic uses of ambiguity (cf. S. Winkler, "Exploring Ambiguity" 3). Even though in this concrete situation the coach was not aware of the fact that he uttered something ambiguous, he can be seen as the producer of ambiguity in this example. This means that the moment of the production of ambiguity always refers to "its first appearance in the given context [...], no matter whether its first appearance reveals the ambiguous nature of the item" (Hartmann et al. 12). The coach produced the ambiguity, but he did so unwittingly; thus, his utterance can be seen as an example of non-strategic production of ambiguity. Strategy here refers to the question whether the ambiguity of an utterance "serves the function of a means to reach a particular goal in communication" (Hartmann et al. 12). Especially in literary studies, it is often a matter of debate whether the

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ambiguity of a given textual element was strategically produced by the author (and hence, intended to be understood as ambiguous by readers), or whether the text's audience is reading more into the work than there actually is. This problem is sometimes satirised in self-annotations, which, among other things, can suggest deliberately outlandish interpretations (thus finding additional meanings in a passage that, at first sight, looked quite inambiguous) or, in turn, claim that an annotated section only has one completely unequivocal meaning (thus feigning ignorance of this section's actual strategic ambiguity).

The question of interpretation shows that the percipient (i.e. hearer, reader, beholder[48] etc.) of an ambiguous utterance also has to be taken into account when analysing ambiguity. There are many different ways in which percipients may interact with ambiguity:

Case	**Example**
(1) They may hear (or read, or see, etc.) a *strategically produced* ambiguity and …	
(1.1) not perceive it as such	Producer: [*ironically, after his flatmate did the bare minimum of chores*] Wow, you're being really diligent today. Percipient: Thanks! [*Thinking*: Finally someone noticed!]
(1.2) perceive and deliberately ignore it	Pro.: [*ironically, after his flatmate did the bare minimum of chores*] Wow, you're being really diligent today. Per.: Yes. [*Thinking*: No reason to be so passive-aggressive about it.]
(1.3) show in some way that they perceive it as such	Pro.: [*ironically, after his flatmate did the bare minimum of chores*] Wow, you're being really diligent today. Per.: Is this a real compliment for once, or are you criticising me again?

48 On ambiguity in images and ambiguation through images, see Potysch, *Wiederholt doppeldeutig in Bild und Schrift*; and Händler, *Zeichen – Erkenntnis – Kommunikation*.

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(2) They may also hear a *non-strategically* produced ambiguity and …

(2.1) not perceive it as ambiguous but nevertheless correctly understand the utterance	Pro.: Let's meet at the bank. [meaning riverbank] Per.: *Goes to the riverbank.*
(2.2) perceive it as ambiguous but nevertheless disambiguate it because the context does not leave much room for doubt	Pro.: Let's meet at the bank. [meaning riverbank] Per.: *Thinks*: She must mean the riverbank; Barclay's wouldn't be a nice place for a first date.
(2.3) not perceive it as ambiguous but accidentally misinterpret the utterance	Pro.: Let's meet at the bank. [meaning riverbank] Per.: *Goes to the local financial institute.*
(2.4) strategically interpret it as ambiguous	Pro.: [a teacher talking about her recent hike]: It was very long and hard, but I enjoyed it. Per.: [her students]: *Start to giggle*.
(2.5) accidentally perceive it as strategically ambiguous	Pro.: My uncle once saw a tiger in his bathing trunks. [*Meaning*: his uncle was wearing bathing trunks when he saw a tiger.] Per.: Haha, good one – I love syntactic ambiguities! [Believing the speaker wanted to make a joke and suggest that the tiger was hiding in his uncle's bathing trunks or even that the tiger was wearing them.] Pro.: What?

(cf. Winter-Froemel and Zirker 311–15; S. Winkler, "Exploring Ambiguity" 5)

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Like the producer of ambiguity, the percipient may thus strategically or non-strategically react to the producer's (likewise strategically or non-strategically) ambiguous utterance. Non-strategic perception refers to all cases in which percipients are not aware of strategically produced ambiguities (case 1.1) and to cases in which they remain unaware of a non-strategically produced ambiguities (cases 2.1 and 2.3). In all other cases, i.e. when percipients either in some way recognise, and react to, a strategically produced ambiguity or deliberately misconstrue a non-strategically produced ambiguity, they are engaging in strategic perception. Example 2.5 is a special case because here the strategic perception of ambiguity still accidentally leads to a (non-strategic) misunderstanding.

The perception-side is especially intriguing with regard to self-annotations because these contain different kinds of perceptions of ambiguity. Examples include (1) authors' strategic self-perceptions of the ambiguities they strategically produced in the annotated text, (2) perceptions (both strategic and non-strategic) by fictional annotator personas (e.g. finding absurd additional meanings in the annotated text that are quite obviously precluded by the context), (3) notes quoting actual critics as percipients (who may have found ambiguities that were not strategically produced or missed some that were), and (4) notes that anticipate and try to guide perceptions by real-life critics (e.g. by clarifying the meaning of a certain passage to prevent misunderstandings). In all cases except the third, the author takes on the double role as the producer and the percipient of ambiguity.

An especially fascinating point about self-annotations is that, in their enactment of the perception of ambiguity, they often employ a great deal of irony. For instance, they may claim that a certain passage was by no means intended to be ambiguous and that it should only be read in some way, while the great majority of readers recognise that this passage is actually highly (and strategically) ambiguous. Pope's 'innocent' annotation on "Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first" quoted above is an example of such a note – unconvincingly disambiguating a passage that may both plausibly be read as an intertextual reference and a dangerous political remark.

Such cases highlight the need for an analytic parameter that is not yet included in the Tübingen model of ambiguity: the difference between *overt* and *covert* strategic productions and perceptions of ambiguity. 'Overt' here means that the producers and percipients of an ambiguous utterance are explicit about their strategic (i.e. conscious and intentional) use of, or reaction to, ambiguity. 'Covert' means that they are not. An example of a covert

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use of ambiguity is (1.2) named above. The producer says, 'Wow, you're being really diligent today', thus strategically producing an ironic utterance[49] that is ambiguous with respect to the question whether it is a genuine compliment or a hidden reproach. The percipient is aware of this ambiguity but only answers 'Yes', *disguising* this awareness. The producer may then respond, 'Don't get me wrong, this was not meant as a criticism. I really appreciate your help', again disguising the fact that the initial utterance was indeed meant as a reproach. Both producer and percipient here try to hide their strategic use of ambiguity, and – just like Pope in the example above – maintain the ambiguity by pretending to disambiguate. In many of such cases (both in every-day communication and literature) it is difficult and sometimes even impossible to conclusively decide whether an ambiguous utterance was (1) strategically but covertly produced/perceived, or (2) indeed non-strategically produced/perceived. This problem can be termed the 'ambiguity of ambiguity'– the ambiguity of whether or not something was *intended* to be ambiguous by a speaker.

Especially in literary texts, questions of perceived/non-perceived, strategic/non-strategic, and overt/covert productions and perceptions of ambiguity have to be answered both with respect to the external level of communication (between author and readers) and the internal level(s) of communication (between narrators and narratees or characters among each other) (cf. Winter-Froemel and Zirker 303–04; 322–23). For instance, authors may strategically produce an ambiguous utterance, while the characters in the work remain unaware of the fact that they utter (or, rather, are made to utter) something ambiguous.

The examples that I have used in this section have been concerned with ambiguities on the word- or sentence-level only. However, the textual elements that can be ambiguous range from a mere morpheme to a whole complex of "thematically, structurally and/or functionally linked texts" (e.g. a whole discourse tradition) (Hartmann et al. 14–15). Likewise, as briefly alluded to in

49 Irony is a special case of ambiguity since ironic utterances are often meant to convey only one meaning (rather than two or more like other ambiguous statements) while still giving percipients the chance to interpret the utterance in two ways – straightforwardly or ironically. As will be shown below, in many cases it is hence not the irony itself that is ambiguous but the question whether an utterance should be understood as ironic or serious in the first place. Another way in which ambiguity is relevant for irony is that ironical utterances are often voiced by two speakers – e.g. an author who is being ironic and a character who is being serious (and, hence, ironised by the author). Chapter 2.3 will discuss examples in which even this clear-cut distinction between ironic author and serious, ironised character is again ambiguated. For the relationship between irony and ambiguity, also see Bauer, "Ironie und Ambiguität" *passim*.

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the discussion of Rimmon's approach to ambiguity, an ambiguity can be local or global; this concerns the question up to which level the ambiguity is relevant (cf. Hartmann et al. 13; Ebert 16). For instance, a single self-annotation, appended at the very end of a literary text and saying 'but this was all hackneyed nonsense' has bearings on the interpretation of the text as a whole, ambiguating it with respect to the question whether readers should still interpret it as a serious literary endeavour or rather as mere nonsense or a parody. This question about the range of an ambiguity is often, but not always, intertwined with the question whether the ambiguity is resolved at some point (e.g. through context or through metalinguistic strategies by which the ambiguity is explicitly addressed) or whether it is maintained throughout the text (cf. Winter-Froemel and Zirker 315).

The summary of the Tübingen model of ambiguity has shown why this fine-grained approach is helpful for analysing self-annotations and, in turn, why the field of self-annotations is particularly intriguing when one sets out to study how ambiguity is used in literary texts. Self-annotated works contain both the strategic production and the strategic perception of ambiguity; they show how authors pretend to explain the meanings of their works, how authors react to critics' interpretations of their works, and how authors try to (mis)guide future readings of their works. Self-annotations are the confined spaces where many different ambiguities interact and even the briefest annotation is able to ambiguate a whole work, discourse, or genre. Pope's and Byron's self-annotations use and create ambiguity in numerous highly inventive ways. However, both the strategies in, and the function of, their ambiguous as well as ambiguating notes are still understudied.

1.5 Ambiguous Self-Annotation: The Cases of Pope and Byron

1.5.1 *Why Pope and Byron?*

Pope and Byron lend themselves extremely well to a study of ambiguity in and through authorial annotation – for analytical as well as for literary historical reasons. For one, only very of few of their contemporaries use such a variety of different ambiguating strategies in their notes (as will be shown in chapters 2.1.1 and 3.1.1). Likewise, the extent to which Pope and Byron employ their annotations to ambiguate entire works as well as their own public image is unparalleled among authors of their respective periods. Thus, the focus on these two authors allows for an analysis of how different kinds of ambiguities are made to interact with one another as well as of how local ambiguities are strategically employed to create global ones.

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Furthermore, Byron's and Pope's uses of self-annotation are especially intriguing in that they are so variegated and completely unpredictable. When referring to any one of their notes, readers can never be sure how this note will relate to the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation. They have to anticipate everything – from a note that provides them with reliable, factual information, to one that sets out to provide this kind of information while actually performing very different functions, and even to a note that explicitly subverts the conventions of editorial annotation. By contrast, for example, the notes in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* provide readers with factual, explanatory information throughout (thereby always closely following xenographic conventions), while readers of Thémiseul de Saint-Hyacinthe's *Chef d'œuvre d'un inconnu* are aware that the notes contain deliberately nonsensical explanations (thereby consistently violating the rules of xenographic annotation). In these two works, readers have a rather clear understanding of what awaits them in every single note, whereas the only thing that readers of Byron's and Pope's notes may expect is the unexpected. Their annotations, hence, are prime examples of the playfulness, creativity, and variety of the discourse tradition of authorial annotation.

Lastly, Pope and Byron occupy a central position in the roughly one hundred years in which poetical self-annotation was in its heyday. As will be shown in chapter two, it was Pope who made self-annotations an almost indispensable feature of satirical poetry for the century following the publication of his *Dunciad*s. Authorial notes existed long before Pope, but it was him that later satirical self-annotators would credit as the populariser of the genre (see chapter 2.1.3). As for Byron, he was, of course, among the best-selling writers of his day: while Wordsworth's self-annotations were read by a few hundred contemporaries in Britain and still fewer elsewhere, Byron's reached tens of thousands throughout the world (and those in his *Don Juan* even millions; cf. St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 333). His notes were eagerly discussed by crown princess Charlotte (p. 325 below) and Austrian reviewers (p. 238 below), by Venetian salonnières (p. 340n below) and German translators (p. 239n below). In his capacity as one of the most successful poets of the day and as an avid self-annotator, Byron had an immense influence on how contemporaries encountered the discourse tradition of authorial notes. Thus, Pope and Byron prominently frame the time span between the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum* in 1729 and the end of the Romantic age – a period during which the practice of adding notes to one's own literary texts was more prevalent than at any other point in time before and after (see chapters 2.1.3 and 3.1).

Thus, the focus on Pope and Byron allows for (1) an extremely broad overview of the different kinds of ambiguities that are used in, and created

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through, self-annotations; (2) an exceptionally detailed outline of the possible functions of self-annotation; as well as (3), due to the popularity of Pope's and Byron's works, an insight into the practices of authorial annotation that were best-known to their contemporaries.

1.5.2 *Previous Studies of Pope's and Byron's Self-Annotations*

As has been hinted at above and as will be shown in more detail in chapter two, the copiousness, complexity, and creativity of Pope's authorial notes in the *Dunciad*s was unprecedented even though the tradition of literary self-annotation dates back to the 1300s. But despite its ground-breaking nature and its enormous impact on later self-annotated satires, James R. Sutherland's 1943 remark that the *Dunciad*s' "whole prose apparatus deserves more careful study than it usually gets" still holds true (Sutherland, "Introduction" xl). Even though Pope's annotations are generally briefly mentioned whenever the *Dunciad*s are discussed, one can find only a handful of longer studies on them.[50] In his *Pope's Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning*, Aubrey Williams mainly

50 Apart from the works discussed here, one should also take notice of Donald Bourne's PhD thesis *A Poetics of Annotation: Alexander Pope's Footnotes*, which I unfortunately only discovered while preparing the present book for printing. I regret that this prevents me from engaging with his stimulating thesis in more detail.

Bourne discusses the annotations in a variety of Pope's works, including those in the *Dunciad*s. As regards the latter, I have two main disagreements with him. The first is concerned with his comparison of the 1729 *Dunciad* and the 1742 and 1743 *Dunciad*s. Bourne argues that "[t]he text of the [1729] *Variorum* edition consists of both the verse and the footnotes, which should be read alongside the verse, while many of the footnotes in the later [1742 and 1743] *Dunciads* are paratext and – in many cases – not part of the satire presented by the verse. The later *New Dunciad* of 1742 and *The Dunciad in Four Books* of 1743 contain many allographic footnotes [by Warburton], where the rhetorical purpose of the footnotes is just to be present and not to amplify the verse, and if these footnotes are removed from the text then the satire present in the verse does not suffer – whereas the satire of the *Variorum* edition is weakened by removal of the authorial and actorial footnotes" (Bourne 140–41). As I argue in chapter 2.3, however, the introduction of 'Bentley' as yet another 'annotator' in the 1742 and 1743 *Dunciad*s has a profound impact on the meaning of both the new four-book *Dunciad* and the older three-book *Dunciad* – especially due to Bentley's fights with the 'editor' Martinus Scriblerus over the meaning of the poem. Many of the 1743 notes that – in the 1751 posthumous edition – are declared to be Warburton's or the joint work of Pope and Warburton likewise engage with the poem in highly complex ways (see, e.g., the one discussed in chapter 2.4.1 below). Put briefly, the notes in the 1742 and 1743 *Dunciad*s are just as integral to the meaning of Pope's satire as those in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum.*

My second disagreement with Bourne relates to his analysis of Pope's self-presentation in his notes. He argues that, throughout his works, Pope uses annotations to position "himself as a gentleman-poet and classical author for both current and later readers" (27). Yet, as I emphasise throughout this book, Pope's self-presentation in the *Dunciad*s is very

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focuses on the notes' depiction of the dunces, the ways in which the notes (mis)use quotes from Pope's enemies, and the question to what extent they can be seen as factual references to the reality outside the poem. James McLaverty's "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art" is concerned with how the *Dunciad*s parody Dutch variorum editions and the scholarly editions prepared by Lewis Theobald and Richard Bentley, as well as with how they strive to emulate Claude Brossette's 1716 Boileau edition. The fourth chapter of McLaverty's *Pope, Print, and Meaning* builds on these analyses, furthermore discussing the *Dunciad*s annotations in the context of Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, examining the role of the fictional annotator Scriblerus in the notes, and investigating Pope's use of Giles Jacob's *Lives of the English Poets* as a source for his annotations. Valerie Rumbold's "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" is concerned with the evolution of the *Dunciad*s annotations from the sparsely annotated 1728 edition up to the 1743 four-book *Dunciad*.[51] Claude Rawson's article "Heroic Notes" discusses the annotations in the *Dunciad*s in the context of the mock-epic tradition, and William Kinsley's "The *Dunciad* as Mock-Book" argues that "the Dunciad as book has useful real notes, and as mock-book it has ludicrously inept and overgrown mock-notes" (Kinsley 38). Most recently, Anthony Ossa-Richardson argues that some critics underestimate Pope's strategic use of ambiguity and claim that he mainly employed it for puns and easily resolvable equivocalities rather than to complicate the meaning of his works as a whole (cf. Ossa-Richardson 263). To counter this argument, Ossa-Richardson discusses two of Pope's punning annotations in detail (*Dunciad* 1.203 and 4.202n; cf. Ossa-Richardson 264–66) but mainly focuses on how the dunces reacted to, and exploited, some of Pope's ambiguities not only in the *Dunciad*s but also in his other works (cf. 267–76). Ossa-Richardson also discusses some of the notes that William Warburton contributed to the posthumous 1751 edition of Pope's *Works* (cf. 277–82). Hence, as of yet, Pope scholarship has mainly dealt with four aspects relating to ambiguity in the annotations on the *Dunciad*s: (1) how some of the dunces reacted to the various ambiguities in Pope's notes, (2) the question whether the annotations are factual explanations or fictional continuations of the poem, (3) the question how the notes ambiguously imitate, transform, and subvert the notes in some of the scholarly xenographic works that Pope drew on, and (4) the question whether the notes 'contributed' by Scriblerus are to be seen as accurate, helpful explanations that more or less

ambiguous, wavering between that of a high-minded moralist and that of a playful, irreverent libeller who relishes his dirty fight with the dunces.

51 For further analyses of the *Dunciad*s notes, also see Rumbold's introductions to *The Dunciad (1728) & The Dunciad Variorum (1729)* as well as to *The Dunciad: In Four Books.*

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express Pope's own views or as outlandish misinterpretations that are being ridiculed by Pope.

On Pope's annotations for his other poems, there is still less material to be found, the only major exception being McLaverty's overview of the notes that were included in the 1735/1736 *Works* (*Pope, Print, and Meaning*, ch. 8). There are also a few essays on the notes in *Windsor Forest* and *Sober Advice from Horace*.[52] Despite the scarcity of literature on Pope's self-annotations, their importance – especially for the *Dunciad*s – has been stressed time and again (cf. Emrys Jones, "Pope and Dulness" 231–33; Rawson, "Heroic Notes" 100–01; Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered* 252; Weber 8–9; Griffin 219–23; Sutherland, "'The Dull Duty of an Editor'" 204; McLaverty, "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art" 96; Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy", "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 186; 194; Rumbold, "Editor's Headnote" in 1729 *Dunciad* 114; Deneau 210; Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 159).

The main reason why the annotations in Pope's *Dunciad*s (as well as his other poems) have been rather neglected for so long is probably the often-repeated argument that Pope was completely opposed to annotation and only used his notes to mock, parody, and vituperate this discourse tradition. For instance, in his *The Devil's Details: A History of Footnotes*, Chuck Zerby claims that the *Dunciad*s show "the fierce antagonism with which [Pope] sought to confront annotators and stamp out annotation" (Zerby 57). In a similar vein, Peter Cosgrove asserts that the

> intention of Pope's notes is to supplement the thrust of the verse satire on Grub Street authors and poor pedants, and to incorporate the satire against scholarship in a parody of the structure of the footnote itself. That is, the footnotes to Pope's poem are written and appended by Pope not in order to clarify or authenticate, but in order to satirize the footnote as apparatus. (Cosgrove 134–35)

Seth Rudy and F. R. Leavis even go a step further and argue that readers should disregard Pope's self-annotations in the *Dunciad*s altogether. Rudy claims that most of them "add nothing useful to the forming of a correct understanding of the poem proper" and that "[t]he whole truth – the complete truth – resides in the poem" (Rudy, *Literature and Encyclopedism in Enlightenment Britain* 66; 68). And Leavis contends that "to read [the *Dunciad* apparatus] all through will be worth no one's while[.] [...] [N]otes are not necessary: the poetry doesn't depend upon them in any essential respect" (Leavis 88). Both the argument

52 For Pope's self-annotations in *Windsor Forest*, see Cleary, "Slouching Toward Augusta". For the notes in *Sober Advice from Horace*, see Moskovit, "Pope's Purposes in *Sober Advice*" and Atkins, "Strategy and Purpose in Pope's *Sober Advice from Horace*".

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that the notes in the *Dunciad*s exclusively serve to satirise the discourse tradition of annotation as a whole and the argument that they are not worth any attention at all will be refuted in the course of this study. Thus, I agree with Sutherland who argues that the notes in the *Dunciad*s are "all very much part of Pope's joke, and to ignore the critical apparatus is to miss a good part of his satirical intention" (Sutherland, "'The Dull Duty of an Editor'" 204), as well as with Daniel Deneau who quotes two annotations signed by the fictional editor Scriblerus as proof that "the notes of the *Dunciad* are essential for a proper understanding of the poem" (Deneau 210).[53]

In comparison to Pope's annotations, Byron's have received considerable scholarly attention. However, with a few exceptions, this attention has often focused on the same works and rather similar research questions. Charles Robinson's "Byron's Footnotes" offers an extensive overview of the layout of Byron's notes throughout his career, while Alice Levine's "Byronic Annotations" presents a broad summary of their functions. Yet, Levine does not provide close readings, which in many cases obscures the complexity of the annotations she discusses. Ourania Chatsiou's two contributions to the study of Byron's notes are both concerned with deconstruction, digression, and Romantic irony. Her essay "Lord Byron: Paratext and Poetics" focusses on *The Giaour*, while her unpublished PhD thesis *Paratext and Poetics in British Romantic-Period Literature* also discusses examples from *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (*EBSR*), *The Waltz, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (*CHP*), and *The Bride of Abydos*. By drawing on manuscript evidence, Chatsiou furthermore provides insights into when exactly Byron added the notes during the composition process. Alex Watson, Julia Coole, Timothy Webb, Ruth Knezevich, and Naqaa Abbas offer a postcolonial perspective on the notes in *CHP* and, in the case of Abbas, also on the annotations in *The Giaour*. Furthermore, Watson discusses the importance of John Cam Hobhouse's allographic notes for Byron's *CHP*. Stephen Cheeke's *Byron and Place*, though not explicitly dedicated to a study of Byron's annotations, often refers to the ways in which Byron uses his notes to authenticate and support the main text. Lastly, both Barbara Ravelhofer and Christoph Bode examine the interplay of the different voices that can be found in both the poem and the notes of *The Giaour*. This brief overview shows that, even though there are numerous studies of Byron's annotations, they focus on one function exclusively (Cheeke), do not offer a sufficiently detailed analysis of

53 One might rephrase Deneau's statement in accordance with my (and, incidentally, Deneau's own) analysis of the ambiguity of these two notes (see chapter 2.3.4) and state that the annotations are essential for recognising that a 'proper' or unequivocal understanding of the *Dunciad*s is impossible.

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his remarkably intricate notes (Levine), or, if they do, primarily concentrate on *The Giaour* and/or *CHP*. Furthermore, in studies that indeed provide close readings of Byron's notes, there is usually either no focus on their ambiguity at all or the focus is mainly restricted to the tonal clash between the poem and the notes in *The Giaour* and what this means for the interpretation of this work as a whole.

1.5.3 *Focus of the Present Study*

Given the scarcity of studies on Pope's annotations in general (and even much less on their creation and use of ambiguity) and the fact that most works on Byron's notes are concerned with the same poems and ambiguities, the present study has five aims. Firstly, it strives to embed Pope's and Byron's authorial notes in a larger literary and cultural context. Hence, chapter 2.1 highlights different models for Pope's self-annotation in the *Dunciad*s and shows how he introduces a great number of innovations to the discourse tradition. This chapter will also provide proof of the enormous impact that the *Dunciad*s notes had on later (satiric) practices of self-annotation. Analogically, chapter 3.1 focuses on authorial notes in the Romantic age, puts emphasis on the ubiquity of poetic self-annotation around 1800, and demonstrates that such notes were indeed widely read and discussed by contemporaries. The chapter will also lay the groundworks for showing that Byron's notes creatively transform and flout the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation to a much greater degree than the notes of most of his contemporaries. Chapters 2.1 and 3.1 hence add to our understanding of the practices of, and contemporary responses to, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary self-annotation in general.

The second aim is to closely analyse a great number of examples from Pope's and Byron's self-annotations in order to arrive at a systematic overview and categorisation of the textual *strategies* used in their notes as well as of the (literary, satirical, social, etc.) *purposes* for which Pope and Byron employ these notes. In other words, how do Pope and Byron make use of their self-annotations to support, complement, enrich, challenge, alter, and undermine the meaning(s) of isolated passages in their poems, of entire works, and even of their œuvre and their public image as a whole? Pope's and Byron's strategic use of ambiguity in these notes as well as their manner of creating ever new ambiguities through self-annotation will lie at the centre of these close readings.

Based on these close readings, a third aim can be achieved, namely to use Pope's and Byron's self-annotations in order to see certain aspects of their works in a new light. For instance, an analysis of the authorial notes in Byron's "Lachin Y Gair" (1807) shows that his penchant for self-subversion

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and self-contradiction can be found even in his earliest works, not just in the notes on *The Giaour* (1813) and in the main text of *Don Juan* (1819–1824) (see chapter 3.4.1).[54] And in Pope's case, the analysis of a cluster of annotations will address some of the central research questions regarding the *Dunciad*s, i.e. whether Dulness indeed triumphs in the end, whether the dunces are really presented as a threat to culture and society at large or rather just as fools who are too incompetent to do any harm, and, based on this, whether the *Dunciad*s are ultimately optimistic or pessimistic works (see chapter 2.3.4).

The fourth aim is to further the study of self-annotations in general – be it by conceptualising how they differ from xenographic annotations, by discussing matters of their layout history (e.g. their gradual move from the margins to the bottom of the page and later to the end of the volume), or by emphasising that they are indeed an integral part of the works that they are appended to and, hence, have to be taken into account when analysing these works. The tripartite categorisation that I employ in my systematic approach to Pope's and Byron's annotations – first dividing them according to the function(s) of xenographic notes that they mimic, then further breaking them down depending on the textual strategies used in them, and lastly subdividing them according to the actual function(s) that they serve – can be adopted for self-annotations of all kinds, regardless of their period, author, or genre. Furthermore, my 'External Appendix' provides the groundworks for a study of the history of self-annotation by providing the titles and selected further metadata of more than 1100 self-annotated literary works published between 1300 and 1900 (http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434; for a brief introduction, see p. 391 in the present volume).

Lastly, but not less importantly, the study seeks to contribute to the study of literary ambiguity, especially with regard to satirical works and to cases in which multiple ambiguities reinforce each other.

The examples analysed here will be drawn from a wide selection of Byron's published works and his *Hints from Horace*[55] as well as from Pope's *Dunciad*s.

54 Chatsiou, for instance, sees the interaction between the sombre poem and the facetious notes in *The Giaour* as the earliest example of Romantic irony in Byron (cf. Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 645). Studies that disregard Byron's annotations altogether usually only focus on *Don Juan* as *the* example of Byron's tendency for self-subversion and self-contradiction. Anne Mellor, for example, argues: "the poetry of *Manfred*, the *Turkish Tales*, and the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* presents a naive enthusiasm or mystifying 'self-creation' without a de-creative skepticism […]. Not until *Don Juan*, his never-ended master-piece, did Byron manage to combine the antithetical impulses of his being in a work of artistic irony" (Mellor 38).

55 *Hints from Horace* remained unpublished in Byron's lifetime, but he prepared it for publication twice, once in 1811 (to be published by Cawthorne) and once in 1820–21 (to be

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The focus on the *Dunciad*s is warranted by the fact that, of all of Pope's works, they offer the widest range of self-annotatorial strategies and functions, and the most diverse and far-reaching of uses and creations of ambiguity. However, particularly noteworthy examples from his other works will also be briefly addressed.

There are three aspects regarding Pope's and Byron's self-annotations that this study will not cover: a detailed insight into the economic motives behind adding annotations, a comprehensive discussion of the question of censorship with regard to self-annotations, and a step-by-step comparison between individual notes by Pope and Byron. Regarding the first, it should nevertheless be kept in mind that authors also sometimes had monetary reasons for annotating their works (cf. Edson, "Introduction" xvii). As William St. Clair notes, "after 1774, if a text were revised sufficiently, it could qualify as a new intellectual property"; adding a substantial number of notes to an older work could thus enable the author to claim a new copyright (St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 182; cf. Edson, "Introduction" xvii). This has been named as one of the reasons why Walter Scott decided to add copious notes when preparing the Magnum Opus edition of his Waverly novels towards the end of his career. By extending the copyright, he "secure[d] a future income for his surviving family" (Hughes 53). Likewise, it appears that publishers could use the fact that a work was heavily annotated as a reason for selling it at a more expensive price. When Byron was preparing the first two cantos of *CHP* for publication, his publisher John Murray and his friend and adviser Robert Charles Dallas urged him to write more notes, possibly to justify why a bound copy of the work of a yet comparatively unknown author cost a forbiddingly high 50 shillings – half the weekly income of a gentleman (cf. *BLJ* 2: 107, 110; St. Clair, "The Impact of Byron's Writings" 4).[56]

As regards the issue of censorship, notes could either fall victim to it, or could, on the contrary, even be a means of avoiding an indictment for libel. The first case can be observed in Byron, who was sometimes urged by Dallas, Murray, and others to change or omit certain notes, often on religious or

published by Murray) (cf. Byron, *CPW* 1: 426). It was first published in the fifth volume of the 1831 *Works* of Byron.

56 Unfortunately, the letters that John Murray wrote to Byron between September 1811 and September 1812 are no longer extant (cf. Murray 7). Likewise, Robert Charles Dallas's *Correspondence of Lord Byron, With a Friend* does not include the letters in which he seems to have asked Byron to write more notes. We hence cannot know which arguments exactly Murray and Dallas brought forward to convince Byron to add even more annotations for *CHP* I and II, but we can be sure that they did so from Byron's annoyed inquiry whether he must really "write more Notes? are there not enough?" (*BLJ* 2: 111).

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political grounds (cf. Dallas, *Recollections* 34, 39–40, 179–81; Murray 177–78, 187, 202).[57] In at least one instance Murray also took the liberty to omit a note without Byron's permission – an incident that resulted in two furious letters from Byron to his publisher and contributed to the deterioration of their business relationship (cf. *BLJ*: 8: 192; 194). In Pope's case, however, a few of the *Dunciad*s notes may be seen as a creative way of preventing the possible legal repercussions of some of the most dangerous satiric passages (for a brief discussion, see chapter 2.1.2).

The last point, the decision not to offer a detailed comparison between Pope's and Byron's strategies and uses of self-annotation may appear surprising at first sight. Given Byron's boundless admiration for Pope[58] and the fact that his early satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (*EBSR*) constantly evokes Pope's heavily annotated *Dunciad*s as its model,[59] one might expect

57 For the censorship of Byron in general, see Ashton, "The Censorship of Byron's *Marino Faliero*"; Dowden, "Byron and the Austrian Censorship"; and Blann, *Throwing the Scabbard Away*. For censorship in the Romantic age in general, see Mee, "'Examples of Safe Printing'"; Mee, *Treason, Seditious Libel, and Literature in the Romantic Period*; Harling, "The Law of Libel and the Limits of Repression, 1790–1832"; Conolly, *The Censorship of English Drama*; and Worrall, *Theatric Revolution*. For a discussion of censorship in the Augustan and Romantic ages in general, see Keymer, *Poetics of the Pillory*.

58 Byron argues, for instance, that "[n]either time – nor distance – nor grief – nor age – can ever diminish my veneration for him – who is the great Moral poet – of all times – of all climes – of all feelings – and of all stages of existence. […] His poetry is the Book of Life. – Without canting, and yet without neglecting, Religion, he has assembled all that a good and great man can gather together of moral wisdom cloathed [sic] in consummate beauty. […] A thousand years will roll away before such another can be hoped for in our literature" (Byron, "Letter to John Murray Esq." *CMP* 158).

59 *EBSR* mentions Pope's enemies Lord Hervey, Edmund Curll, John Dennis, and James Ralph (cf. *EBSR* 372; 380), claims that several of Byron's contemporaries deserve to be put in the *Dunciad*s as well (cf. 384; 751), and makes numerous allusions to Pope's satire (cf. *EBSR* 32; 103–10; 127; 138; 306; 309; 532). In a cancelled 'argument' to the poem, Byron both imitates Pope's practice of prefacing each book of the *Dunciad*s with a summary of its contents and the archaic language of Pope's fictional editor Scriblerus. The argument begins as follows: "[t]he Poet considereth times past and their poesy, – maketh a sudden transition to times present – is incensed against Bookmakers – reviileth W. Scott for cupidity and balladmongering with notable remarks on Master Southey" (*CPW* 1: 401).

Byron's letters also show that the *Dunciad*s remained at the back of his mind throughout his life. For instance, in 1817, he claims that Coleridge is the "new Orator Henley" (a preacher who is attacked several times in the *Dunciad*s) (*BLJ* 5: 267), and, in 1822, during the dispute with his publisher John Murray, Byron alludes to two publishers who were put in the *Dunciad*s, explaining that he "had hoped that the race of Curl and Osborne was extinct", and menacingly adds: "[p]erhaps you wish that of Pope to revive also" (*BLJ* 10: 28). (For other mentions of the *Dunciad*s in Byron's letters, see *BLJ* 4: 79; 6: 31). Furthermore, Byron's public "Letter to John Murray Esq." (1821, one of his contributions to

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that the notes in *EBSR* and perhaps even in Byron's œuvre as a whole bear a great similarity to those in the *Dunciad*s. Alice Levine, for example, argues that "[i]f Gibbon was Byron's model for the scholarly note, Swift, Gifford and, especially, Pope provided models of the mock-scholarly note" (A. Levine 128), while Frederick Beaty contends that, for instance, Byron's satire *The Waltz* is placed "within the Popean tradition of mocking couplets and caustic footnotes" (Beaty 67). If this were true, the present study could set out to provide an in-depth analysis of how Byron's practices of self-annotation are influenced by, and perhaps also transform, those of his great idol.

However, this is not the case. Even Byron's *satirical* annotations in *EBSR* and his other works bear hardly any similarity to Pope's (as shown in the "Interlude" on p. 217ff.). His non-satirical notes are even farther away from Pope's practices of authorial annotation. In fact, Pope's and Byron's strategies and functions of self-annotations are too different to provide much common ground on which individual notes can be compared. For instance, Pope's continued revision of his annotations and his incorporations of real readers' reactions to earlier versions of the poem and notes has almost no parallel in Byron. In turn, the aspect of autobiography – so important for Byron's annotations – barely appears at all in Pope's *Dunciad*s. The only way in which their annotations can be compared is by focusing on rather broad categories, which will be developed through the close reading of individual notes (one such category would be the

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the Pope-Bowles controversy) again shows his familiarity with the *Dunciad*s. He jokingly alludes to the mud-nymphs featured in the second book of the satire (cf. Byron, "Letter to John Murray Esq." 134) and later asserts that "Pope could have no more envied Phillips than he did Welsted – or Theobalds [sic] – or Smedley – or any other given hero of the Dunciad" (145).

The debt that *EBSR* owes to Pope's *Dunciad*s (and works influenced by Pope's satire, like Thomas James Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* and William Gifford's *Baviad* and *Mæviad*) has been noted by many contemporary reviewers as well as by modern scholars (cf. Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics in British Romantic-Period Literature* 44; Jump, "Lord Byron and William Gifford" 323; Lessenich 167; Hawley 83; O'Connell 56, 58; Fuess 70–73; F. Parker 66–69; and Bucknell *passim*). Ritchie Robertson even argues that Pope's *Dunciad*s are crucial for the story of *Don Juan*, but he unfortunately does not elaborate on this point (R. Robertson 1). Emrys Jones discerns a tradition from Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* through Pope's *Dunciad*s and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* to Byron's *Don Juan* (cf. E. Jones, "Pope and Dulness" 236).

For studies of Pope's influence on Byron in general, see A. B. England's *Byron's Don Juan and Eighteenth-Century Literature*; Martin Maner's "Pope, Byron, and the Satiric Persona"; Bernard Beatty's "Continuities and Discontinuities of Language and Voice in Dryden, Pope, and Byron"; Bernard Beatty's "Byron and the Eighteenth Century"; P. M. Yarker's "Byron and the Satiric Temper"; Fred Parker's "Byron's 'Popifying'"; as well as Nicholas Gayle's *Byron and the Best of Poets*.

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degree of self-subversion, another the question what sources, i.e. written texts or the author's own life experience, are being used in the notes). These broad categories help to juxtapose vastly different practices of self-annotations and even authorial notes from different periods and genres. Based on these criteria, a more general comparison (rather than an in-depth comparison of individual notes) between Pope and Byron's strategies and functions of self-annotations will be presented in the conclusion of this study (see chapter 4.1).

Furthermore, even if providing a detailed step-by-step comparison between single notes by Pope and Byron were feasible and fruitful (which it is not), this would misleadingly suggest that Pope's strategies in, and uses of, self-annotation were the greatest single influence on Byron's notes. Such an approach would obscure the fact that Byron's annotations are informed by a great variety of models. To name only a few, these include Sterne's ludic annotations in *Tristram Shandy*, Rousseau's self-subversive ones in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Henley's factual (and allographic) ones in Beckford's *Vathek*, Scott's antiquarian ones in nearly all of his poems, as well as Rogers's and Moore's faux-editorial ones in, for example, *The Voyage of Columbus* and *Intercepted Letters, Or, The Twopenny Post-Bag*. (Byron's models will be discussed in more detail throughout chapter 3.)

Lastly, it is exactly *because* the notes of Byron and Pope fundamentally differ from each other that a combined study of these two writers enables me to arrive at a more comprehensive (though by no means complete) overview and categorisation of the possible strategies and functions of literary self-annotation. Thus, Pope and Byron have just as much been chosen for their similarities (the unpredictability of their notes, their creative use of the conventions of xenographic annotation, their preoccupation with satire) as for their differences.

All things taken together, this study will add to the revaluation that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century self-annotations (and paratexts in general) have received in the past few years. Through the combination of close reading and historical contextualisation, it will become clear that self-annotations were designed to be read, that they were indeed read by contemporaries, that they were strategically employed to perform a vast number of intratextual and socio-pragmatic functions, and that, as a consequence, to ignore them in literary analysis is equivalent to reading only half of the chapters of a work.

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CHAPTER 2

Functions and Strategies of Self-Annotation in Pope

In the section on Pope that follows (pp. 47 to 216), I will first embed Pope's self-annotations in the context of their time by discussing (1) how Pope's notes are modelled on, and differ from, earlier examples of xenographic and authorial annotations; (2) to what extent self-annotations could be used to avoid censorship in Pope's time; and (3) the enormous impact that Pope's notes in the *Dunciad*s had on eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century (satirical) self-annotations. After this introductory overview, the main part of the section will be concerned with an analysis of the functions and strategies of Pope's annotations in the *Dunciad*s, ranging from how exactly they provoked, steered, and responded to readerly reactions, over how Pope employed them for his equivocal self-presentation and social networking, to Pope's highly intricate use of the annotatorial personas 'Scriblerus' and 'Bentley' for ambiguating the *Dunciad*s in their entirety.

2.1 Pope's Self-Annotations in Context

Pope was by no means the first author who annotated his own works. In fact, the practice of literary self-annotation began around 1300, with Guiraut Riquier, Francesco da Barberino, and Boccaccio adding marginal glosses to their own texts (cf. Kendrick 847–49; Griffiths 7).[1] The first English literary work with

1 In Riquier's case, however, it is not entirely clear whether he included the marginal notes himself or whether they were only added by later scribes; as Laura Kendrick points out, this question of authorship poses itself for many marginal notes in the pre-print era (cf. Kendrick 862n13). For Barberino's self-annotations, see Minnis, "Amor and Auctoritas". For the annotations in Boccaccio's *Teseida*, see Hollander, "The Validity of Boccaccio's Self-Exegesis in his *Teseida*"; Schnapp, "Un commento"; Schnapp, "A Commentary"; Kendrick, "The Monument and the Margin"; Ricci, *Scrittura, riscrittura, autoesegesi*; and Noakes, *Timely Reading*.

Dante's *Vita nuova* is usually cited as the first example of self-commentary, but his commentaries do not count as self-annotations in the narrower sense that I adopt in this book (see p. xxi) because they appear right before and after each of the poems, without being tied to a specific lemma in them. For Dante's self-commentary in *La vita nuova*, see, for example, Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author*; Roush, *Hermes' Lyre*, and the references provided in Venturi, "Introduction" 3n4. Lorenzo de' Medici's *Comento de' miei*

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self-annotations is most likely John Gower's *Confessio amantis* (ca. 1390) in which Gower added Latin glosses to his poem written in Middle English and Latin (cf. Griffiths 7).[2] While the notes in these medieval examples are mainly meant to grant authority to vernacular poetry,[3] later instances of authorial annotations in the Renaissance exhibit a considerable degree of playfulness and experimentation. Francesco Berni, for instance, added notes to his bawdy *Capitolo della primiera* (1526), in which he parodies the contemporary vogue for serious, xenographic notes pointing out the deeper meanings of sonnets and canzoni (cf. Mulsow, "Subversive Kommentierung" 136). Furthermore, William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* (1561) features marginal notes that both provide brief summaries of the text and that "mock his own fictional persona, the narrator Streamer, who converses with telltale cats" (Slights, "Edifying Margins" 686n14). As Harriet Archer points out, the notes by Baldwin (as well as by his contemporaries Gascoigne, Whetstone, Breton, and Spenser) thus "leverage and undercut the genres [of scholarly xenographic annotation] to which they purport to belong" (Archer 192). These few examples from the dawn of literary self-annotation show that, even quite early on, the discourse tradition of authorial annotation playfully violated and subverted the conventions of its learned models and created ambiguity by, among other things, experimenting with different fictional annotator personas.

The present subchapter will not be concerned with a detailed history of self-annotation from 1300 up to the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum* in 1729.[4] Instead, it has three aims. Firstly, it strives to show that – although Pope inscribed himself in a multitude of (self-)annotatorial traditions – his self-commentary in the *Dunciad*s is unprecedented with respect to both its extent and complexity: "nowhere before the *Dunciad* had the thing been done so elaborately, or to serve so many different purposes" (Sutherland, "Introduction" xl). Secondly, it reconstructs the contemporary legal context regarding libel

sonetti and Gabriele Fiamma's *Rime spirituali* follow this manner of non-lemmatised self-commentary (cf. Pich 119; Venturi, "Introduction" 1–2).

2 For studies of Gower's self-annotations, see, for instance, Minnis, "Inglorious Glosses"; Galloway, "Gower's *Confessio Amantis*"; and Batchelor, *Unjustified Margins*. In *Diverting Authorities*, Griffiths provides a fuller bibliography (cf. 7n21).

3 Self-annotation as a means of self-authorisation or self-legitimisation was also used in Renaissance religious texts like Bunyan's *The Holy War* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Abraham Cowley's *Davideis*, and Donne's *Devotions*. In all of them, most annotations focus on citing the biblical passages that the texts are based on.

4 An extensive list of self-annotated literary works published between 1300 and 1900 is provided in the 'External Appendix' (http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434; for a brief introduction to this collection, see p. 391 in this volume). The appendix shows how diverse and widespread the practice of authorial annotation has been through the centuries.

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and discusses if and to what extent self-annotations could be used as creative means of evading censorship. Lastly, the chapter establishes the *Dunciad*s as the work which made self-annotation a nearly indispensable feature of satiric poetry until the end of the Romantic age.

2.1.1 The *Dunciad*s in the Context of Earlier (Self-)Annotations

Pope's self-annotations in the *Dunciad*s draw on, and significantly expand, three traditions of literary commentary: (1) scholarly xenographic notes on literary texts, (2) self-annotations found in earlier satires and mock-epic poems, and (3) so-called 'keys', i.e. short (and often unauthorised) publications that promised to identify the victims of recently published satires.

2.1.1.1 Xenographic Annotations

The traditions, theories, and practices of xenographic annotation that are relevant for an understanding of Pope's *Dunciad*s are manifold. The most important ones are (1) those of his enemies Richard Bentley and Lewis Theobald, (2) Dutch variorum editions, (3) Pope's own xenographic annotations in his *Iliad* translation, and (4) Claude Brossette's edition of Nicholas Boileau's works. The fourth point has been thoroughly and convincingly outlined by James McLaverty (cf. *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 87–90; 210–38). For this reason, it will not be discussed here in detail.[5]

Lewis Theobald and Richard Bentley

Lewis Theobald and Richard Bentley occupy a prominent position in the *Dunciad*s, both in the poem and the notes.[6] Theobald is ridiculed as Tibbald,

5 Claude Brossette's *Œuvres de M. Boileau Despréaux. Avec des éclaircissemens historiques donnez par lui-même* was published in 1716 (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 87–88). The two volumes were prepared by Brossette in close collaboration with Boileau who identified allusions and clarified meanings without writing annotations himself. McLaverty offers a detailed comparison between the design of Brossette's edition and the layout of the *Dunciad*s. He notes that, for instance, like Brossette, Pope divides his annotations into "Remarks" and "Imitations" (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 89). Even more importantly, Pope's decision to later employ William Warburton as his collaborating commentator was most likely inspired by the cooperation between Boileau and Brossette.

6 Theobald and Bentley are not only attacked in the poem and notes of the *Dunciad*s but also in *Virgilius Restauratus*, which is usually attributed to Pope's friend John Arbuthnot (cf. Mondschein 182). This parody of Theobald's and Bentley's approaches to textual editing was first published as an appendix to the *Dunciad Variorum* and, there, is declared to have been the endeavour of Scriblerus. In this brief work, Scriblerus is constantly trying to 'emend' Virgil's text and commits the most ridiculous blunders. Like Bentley's edition of Horace, it is written entirely in Latin (a translation can be found in Dee Mondschein's essay "Virgilius Restauratus").

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the 'hero' of the three-book *Dunciad*s. Four annotations in the *Dunciad*s are also (feignedly) attributed to him (see p. 139n below). Bentley began to play a prominent role in the *Dunciad*s from 1742 (the year of his death) onwards. In this year, he was turned into the colleague of Scriblerus, the fictional persona who acts as one of the 'editors' of the *Dunciad*s. This incarnation of Bentley is made to provide many annotations under his own name as well as a preface under the name of Ricardus Aristarchus. As Aristarchus, he also appears as a character in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s (cf. *Dunciad* 4.203–74). Many annotations in the *Dunciad*s ridicule Bentley's and Theobald's approach to textual criticism and sometimes even echo their real notes almost verbatim. Though other textual critics (e.g. Thomas Hearne, see p. 150ff. below) are also satirised in the notes to the *Dunciad*s, Bentley and Theobald are the most prominent victims of Pope's disdain for certain developments in textual editing. In what follows, I will outline the rationale behind Theobald's and Bentley's xenographic notes in order to show how Pope parodies these annotations in the *Dunciad*s while also often going far beyond mere parody. Two of Pope's self-annotations in the *Dunciad*s that he spuriously attributes to Theobald will be discussed here, while the alleged contributions of Bentley to the *Dunciad*s apparatus will be analysed at length in chapter 2.3 below.

In 1726, two years before the publication of the first version of the *Dunciad*s, Theobald enraged Pope by publishing *Shakespeare Restored: Or, a Specimen of the Many Errors, As Well Committed, As Unamended, by Mr. Pope in His Late Edition of This Poet*. The volume is not a critical edition; it only – in most cases justifiably – draws attention to Pope's mistakes in his own edition of Shakespeare.[7] Despite the ridicule that was later showered on him by Pope and his friends, Theobald indeed had a well-founded scholarly approach to textual criticism. Marcus Walsh explains that he

> put into practice with something like consistency a recognizable set of interpretative criteria. A proposed reading should take into account the evidence provided by the surviving witnesses, and the logical, figurative, and dramatic context and coherence of the passage. Readings should be supported, as appropriate, by parallels from Shakespeare himself, or from other writers of his time, by historical knowledge, and by lexicographical or quasi-lexicographical information. And paraphrase should be used as an explicatory tool. (Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* 138)

7 It was only in 1733 that Theobald eventually published his own critical and heavily annotated edition of Shakespeare, *The Works of Shakespeare, in Seven Volumes, Collated with the Oldest Copies, and Corrected; With Notes, Explanatory, and Critical.*

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A few examples from Theobald's work suffice to show how closely Pope later imitated his style in the *Dunciad*s annotations that are attributed to him. In a note on *Shakespeare Restored*, Theobald explains: "Here, again, is a Passage in which we have a *sophisticated* [i.e. corrupted] Reading, copied from the players in some of the Modern Editions, for Want of Understanding the Poet" (Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored* 19, original emphasis). The expression "*sophisticated* Reading", which appears to have been a personal favourite of Theobald's, is echoed by Pope in an annotation attributed to both Theobald and Scriblerus, which begins: "This is a *sophisticated* reading. I think I may venture to affirm all the Copyists mistaken here" (*Dunciad* 3.36n). Theobald's justifications for his emendations are likewise ridiculed by Pope. In *Shakespeare Restored*, after having quoted eighteen (!) parallel passages from Shakespeare's works in order to defend one correction, Theobald explains: "I am afraid of growing too luxuriant in Examples of this Sort, or I could stretch out the Catalogue of this to a great Extent" (Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored* 11).[8] Two pages later, he provides the following note on one of his emendations:

> The Reduplication of the Word *lost* here gives an Energy and an Elegance, which is much easier to be conceiv'd, than explain'd in Terms. Every Reader of this Poet, however, must have observ'd how frequent it is with him to use this Figure. (Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored* 13, original emphasis)

Both of these comments are parodied in an annotation ('signed' by the annotatorial personas Theobald and Scriblerus) that Pope's *Dunciad*s provide on a passage that describes how Edmund Curll's 'waters burn in their passage':

> [T]hough the difference between *burn* and *glow* may seem not very material to others, to me I confess the latter has an elegance, a *je ne sçay quoy*, which is much easier to be conceived than explained. […] [The note then cites seven parallel passages illustrating Pope's use of "glow" from his *Iliad* translation.] I am afraid of growing too luxuriant in examples, or I could stretch this catalogue to a great extent, but these are enough to prove his fondness for this *beautiful word*, which, therefore, let *all future editions* replace here. (*Dunciad* 2.183n, original emphasis)[9]

Even in these two cases, Pope's annotations go beyond simple parody. Pope's first note on the "*sophisticated* reading" imitates Theobald's approach to textual

8 The practice of collating parallel passages from an author's works "as evidence of that author's linguistic habits" – one of Theobald's favourite methods in textual criticism – had been developed by J. C. Scaliger (Jarvis 69). J. C. Scaliger is named as one of Scriblerus's ancestors in *The Memoirs of Scriblerus* (cf. Pope et al. 95).

9 For discussions of this annotation, see A. L. Williams 78–79; Koppenfels 258; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 98; 104; Walsh, "Allusion" 655; and Nokes, *Raillery and Rage* 49.

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criticism in order to ambiguate a passage which can either be read as "length of ears" (as the poem suggests, thereby alluding both to donkeys and to the practice of nailing a criminal's ears to the pillory) or as "length of years" (as the note proposes) (*Dunciad* 3.36n). The rather long annotation on this vital difference takes the opportunity to mock everyone who reacted to the 1728 *Dunciad* but who – as the note argues – 'overlooked' the fact that "ears" does not make sense in this context since Elkanah Settle (the victim of this passage) never stood in the pillory. It also makes fun of those who cited this passage as an example of the fact that Pope unfairly satirises his enemies for immutable physical attributes rather than anything that they have control over. Thus, Pope uses the note which claims that 'length of years' had been the correct reading all along both to parody Theobald's textual criticism *and* to mock his enemies' reactions to his satire. And the second annotation, using parallel passages to claim that Curll's waters "glow" rather than "burn" in their passage, mimics textual criticism in order to dwell on the fact that the lines suggest that Curll had a venereal disease and to ironically disown this implication (for the legal context of this passage, also see p. 76). Thus, the few annotations featuring Theobald in the *Dunciad*s parody his method of textual criticism to satirise the victims of Pope's poem even further.

Moving on to Pope's next enemy-turned-'annotator' in the *Dunciad*s, Richard Bentley was the leading (and most controversial) textual critic of his age (cf. Bourdette 37). His influential and provocative edition of Horace's Works (*Q. Horatius Flaccus: Ex recensione & cum notis atque emendationibus Richardi Bentleii*) was published in 1711. Bentley's endnotes are written in Latin and cover more than half of the volume; they are primarily concerned with textual criticism rather than with explaining Horace's poems. What made this edition so contentious is that Bentley argued in favour of conjectural emendation over manuscript evidence, i.e. he asserted that an editor's understanding of the text, his historical and linguistic knowledge, and his reasoning powers are better suited to establish the correct text than the reliance on extant manuscripts (cf. Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* 61; Haugen 140).[10] This does not, however, mean that Bentley (and other critics who followed this practice) simply ignored all extant

10 This approach is best summarised in his famous statement (in a note to book 3, carmen 27 of his Horace edition) that "Nobis & ratio & res ipsa centum codicibus potiores sunt", i.e. that "to us reason and the thing [i.e. conjectured meaning of the passage] itself are more powerful than a hundred manuscripts" (Bentley, *Horace* 147, my translation). For a detailed discussion of Bentley's editorial principles as well as of the reasons why they were appropriate for classical literature but not for *Paradise Lost*, see Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* 62–86. Also see Power, "Henry Fielding,

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manuscripts; he was, in fact, often very conscientious in collating variants from manuscripts (cf. Power 753).[11] Nevertheless, Bentley had no scruples about declaring all manuscript readings wrong and – based on his interpretation of the text and his contextual and linguistic knowledge – to suggest readings that he deemed more sensible (sometimes with good reason, sometimes not). Though this method of textual criticism had already been practiced on the continent for a while[12] (and, in Britain, had become common in Greek scholarship), its application to a canonical Latin author was still fairly new and "struck polite readers [e.g. 'amateur' editors like Pope] as strange and overwhelmingly technical" (Haugen 47). What added to the controversy surrounding the 1711 Horace edition was that Bentley's notes were rather feisty: he was "incapable of writing in any mode but the competitive and polemical" (Haugen 11). As a consequence, Bentley's Horace edition sparked considerable backlash. One of the most elaborate responses is *Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Seculare of Horace; With a Translation of Dr. Ben-ley's Notes. To Which Are Added, Notes Upon Notes; Done in the Bentleian Stile and Manner*, of which twenty-four volumes were published between 1712 and 1713 (cf. Monk 250; Power 753).[13] The translations are indeed based on Bentley's Latin notes, but they – as his nineteenth-century

Richard Bentley, and the 'Sagacious Reader' of *Tom Jones*" for an overview of contemporary attacks against Bentley's method of textual editing.

11 His infamous edition of *Paradise Lost* is an exception. In this edition, Bentley disingenuously claims that there is no manuscript (even though he had himself privately collated variants from it), so that he had more "freedom to emend" (Hale 58).

12 Conjectural emendation had, to name only a few examples, been practiced by humanist scholars like Jean Dorat, Marc-Antoine Muret, Nicholas Heinsius, Isaac Vossius, and J. J. Scaliger (cf. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger* 83–89; Haugen 124–25).

13 As regards Pope's reaction to Bentley's Horace edition, he not only ridiculed it in the *Dunciad*s but also indirectly attacked it in the preface to his *Works of Mr. William Shakespeare*, where he explains that he prepared the edition "with a religious abhorrence of all Innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense of conjecture" (Pope, *Works of Shakespeare* xxii). For a detailed discussion of Pope's editorial principles and practices in his Shakespeare edition, see Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing* 126–49. Furthermore, Pope derided Bentley in the anonymously published *Sober Advice from Horace* […] *Imitated in the Manner of Mr. Pope. Together with the Original Text, as Restored by the Rev'd R. Bentley* (1734). This brief poem purports to be an imitation of Horace written in the manner of Pope (but, as the work alleges, not by Pope himself). The original rather bawdy Latin and the more innocuous English imitation are printed side by side. In the annotations, the 'Bentley' persona "objects to the imitator's weakening of the images of the original, and demands literal translation of sexual terms that may not be translated literally into English" (Moskovit 198). He is, in other words, "[m]echanically insisting on literalness[.] […] His only concern being with words themselves, he is unaware of their meaning and effects, and oblivious to the smut" (Atkins, "Strategy and Purpose in Pope's *Sober Advice from Horace*" 173).

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biographer complains – adopt a "vulgar phraseology, as would give a ludicrous character to any book" (Monk 250). The 'notes upon notes', then, attack Bentley's arguments and add to the ridicule of the translation.

Despite such satirical detractions, Bentley's works on ancient literature were ground-breaking (and were acknowledged as such by many contemporary scholars), and he is still often regarded as "the greatest ever English classical scholar" (Hale 58). However, his foray into English literature – in his 1732 critical edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost* – was nothing less than a disaster and became "a by-word for bad editorial practice" (Read 213). One modern scholar even scathingly (and not unjustifiably) remarks that "[o]ne's initial impression on reading Richard Bentley's commentary on *Paradise Lost* is that the whole thing must be a joke, so ridiculous [...] are most of his criticisms and corrections" (Gaskin 354). The whole edition revolves around Bentley's unproven (and most likely incorrect) argument that the first editions of *Paradise Lost* had been prepared by an acquaintance or amanuensis of the blind author, and that Milton had only had little influence over the published text. According to Bentley, this 'editor' had committed innumerable mistakes and, to make matters worse, even inserted several unauthorised lines penned by himself (cf. Hale 58; J. M. Levine, "Bentley's Milton" 559).[14] In cases in which Bentley suspected a passage to be an interpolation by the editor, he enclosed it in brackets and conjectured what Milton actually wrote. For instance, annotating the line "As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields" (2.530), he claims:

> This is a manifest Interpolation: its own Silliness betrays it. Why first *Games*, and then *Fields*? as if both were not Fields alike. If *Milton* had made it, he would have said,
> *As at th'* Olympian *or the* Pythian Games.
> But the Thing was too vulgar, to be mention'd by him[.] (Bentley, *Milton* 56, original emphasis)[15]

Worse than his absurd idea about the 'interpolating editor' was the fact that Bentley even set out to correct passages that he believed to be genuine and to

14 In his preface to the edition, Bentley claims that Milton, being blind, "*could only dictate his Verses to be writ by another. Whence it follows, That any Error in Spelling, Pointing, nay even in whose Words of a like or near Sound in Pronunciation, are not to be charg'd upon the Poet, but on the Amanuensis*" (Bentley, *Milton* n.pag., original italics). He goes on to explain that Milton's 'editor' "*thought he had a fit Opportunity to foist into the Book several of his own Verses*" and that "[*t*]*here are some Inconsistences in the System and the Plan of the Poem, for want of* [Milton's] *Revisal of the Whole before its Publication. These are all first discover'd in this Edition*" (n.pag., original italics).

15 Later editors do not follow him.

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propose what Milton should have written instead (cf. J. M. Levine, "Bentley's Milton" 560).[16] He explains: "Milton's *own Slips and Inadvertencies cannot be redress'd without a Change both of the Words and the Sense. Such Changes are here suggested, but not obtruded, to the Reader*" (Bentley, *Milton* n.pag., original emphasis).

The main feature of Bentley's emendations in *Paradise Lost* is their "leaden logic and insensitivity to [rhetorical] figures" (Hale 61).[17] One example may suffice to illustrate this approach: in the line about the Leviathan "haply slumb'ring on the *Norway foam*" (1.203, original emphasis), Bentley emends "foam" to "flood" (later editors do not follow him) and explains in a footnote:

> We allow *Foam* to be sometimes put for Sea or *Water* by our best Poets, especially those that are forc'd to it for Rime. As *Spenser* in his *Epithalamion* says to the Sun,
> *Haste thee, thou fairest Planet, to thy home*
> *Within the Western* Foam.
> But here it comes unhappily; for it must be very solid Foam, that can support a sleeping Whale. Better therefore with plain Simplicity, Flood or Deep. (Bentley, *Milton* 10–11n, original emphasis)

This annotation could just as well have been drawn from the *Dunciad*s apparatus. The brief overview of Bentley's critical methods in two of his editions and their reception shows why Bentley presented such an irresistible target for Pope's satire: he was the most famous and controversial textual critic of his age, his innovative methods were an anathema to genteel amateur editors like Pope and his allies, his litigiousness often overshadowed his insightfulness, and his literal-mindedness and propensity to mistakenly correct the authentic phrasings and ideas of canonical authors made him the perfect prototype of the inept, smug commentator.

16 Bentley's conviction that he is in the position to alter Milton's own words is echoed in one of Scriblerus's notes on the *Dunciad*s in which this fictional annotator explains that he is still busy explaining to the author what the author's text should actually say: "And here, gentle Reader, would I gladly insert the other speech, whereby thou mightest judge between them: but I must defer it on account of some differences not yet adjusted between the noble Author and myself, concerning the *True Reading* of certain passages" (*Dunciad* 4.43n, original emphasis).

17 In the same vein, Gaskin remarks that, "while Milton regularly makes use of […] familiar classical rhetorical techniques […], Bentley as regularly misunderstands these devices and tries to emend them away" (Gaskin 356). A similar reproach is also sometimes levelled against Bentley's edition of Horace; he "could hardly swallow anything so illogical as a metaphor. […] The student of Horace is at no loss to find hundreds of these clever verbal combinations, but to Bentley many of them were intolerable. Almost invariably he preferred the time worn, prosaic, or legal phrase that any true poet would try to avoid" (Jolliffe 283).

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As we will see, however, the annotations in the *Dunciad*s that are attributed to the fictional annotator persona 'Bentley' are not always as outlandish as one might expect. This poses a problem for interpretation: how are we to treat potentially sensible explanations that are ascribed to someone whom every reader knew to be one the laughing-stocks of Pope and his friends? Should we approach 'Bentley's' interpretations with caution, or can we assume that Pope sometimes turned his enemy into his mouthpiece? This ambiguity will be at the centre of chapter 2.3.

Variorum Editions

The first heavily annotated version of the *Dunciad*s (1729) declares itself to be a variorum edition, a type of edition on which there is a surprising lack of secondary literature. Henry Hallam, in his 1839 *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries*, explains that variorum editions were "published, chiefly after 1660, by the Dutch booksellers" and contain "selections from the older critics" (Hallam 102).[18] Such variorum editions are extensively annotated and usually only have a few lines of the main text on each page, the rest of the page being covered in notes by the current editor and a wide selection of previous commentaries on the same text. These notes "either string together citations with the intention of multiplying meaning (or multiplying authority?), or list alternative readings without necessarily privileging one over the other" (Gibson 342–43).

There are several hints that, in calling the heavily annotated *Dunciad*s 'variorum editions', Pope was not only alluding to this type of edition in general but also specifically to the editions prepared by Dutch scholar Cornelius Schrevelius. Maynard Mack's list of Pope's books shows that he owned seventeenth-century variorum editions of Homer, Juvenal, Persius, Martial, Ovid, and Terence – all of which had been prepared by Schrevelius (cf. P. Rogers, "Pope and Martial"

18 Hallam also claims that the annotations in these variorum editions are "for the most part only [textual] critical, as if explanatory observations were below the notice of an editor", but, at least for the variorum editions owned by Pope, this does not seem to be correct (Hallam 102). In the *Dictionnaire portatif de bibliographie* (1805), François Ignace Fournier argues that there are also variorum editions printed in England, Germany and Deux-Ponts (Zweibrücken) but that many book collectors "ne regardent rigoureusement comme [variorum editions] que les éditions donnés en Hollande", i.e. only regard Dutch variorum editions as real variorum editions (Fournier vi–vii). Towards the end of his *Dictionnaire*, Fournier provides a list of extant variorum editions, in which those volumes that he considers to be variorum editions in the truest sense of the word are marked with an asterisk (cf. Fournier 395–401). Thomas Frognall Dibdin's *An Introduction to the Knowledge of Rare and Valuable Editions of the Greek and Latin Classics* (3rd ed., 1808) likewise lists many variorum editions and discusses the merits of each work.

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80; Mack, *Collected in Himself*, list of Pope's books, items 85, 100, 113, 128, 156). He also owned a Quintilian variorum which was begun by Schrevelius and completed by Johann Friedrich Gronovius (cf. P. Rogers, "Pope and Martial" 80; Mack, *Collected in Himself*, item 141). The "Testimonies of Authors concerning our Poet and his Works" (contained in the *Dunciad*s from 1729 onwards) echo the "Testimonia Veterum Scriptorum de Juvenale" and "Scriptorum Veterum de Persio Testimonia" included in Schrevelius's joint edition of Juvenal and Persius. Furthermore, the layout of some – though by no means all – annotated *Dunciad*s editions also harks back to Schrevelius's editions: Pope imitates Schrevelius's manner of quoting the lemma at the beginning of each annotation and of printing the footnotes in double columns separated by a vertical line.[19] And lastly, *The Memoirs of Scriblerus* (1741, written by Pope and the other members of the Scriblerus Club) directly link Martinus Scriblerus – one of the fictional editors of the *Dunciad*s – to Cornelius Schrevelius by claiming that his father was called Cornelius Scriblerus (cf. Pope et al. 95; P. Rogers, "Pope and Martial" 81).[20]

As will be shown throughout, the *Dunciad*s mimic variorum editions by compiling, incorporating, and pitting against each another the comments of many different (real and fictional) critics. Pope uses his notes to quote, manipulate, and respond to his enemies' reactions to the *Dunciads*, and he stages scholarly disputes between the fictional annotators Martinus Scriblerus and Richard Bentley that ambiguate the meaning of the *Dunciad*s in their entirety.

Pope's Commentary on his Iliad *Translation*

For the most part, Pope's annotations on his *Iliad* translation do not serve as models for his self-annotations in the *Dunciads*.[21] Both with regard to their

19 McLaverty argues that the layout of the *Dunciad* annotations is indebted to the layout of Brossette's Boileau edition, but it seems that Pope drew inspiration from both older variorum editions *and* Brossette's more recent work (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 88–89).

20 Pat Rogers suggests that Martinus Scriblerus might not only be 'related' to Schrevelius but also to Johann Friedrich Gronovius "because as a native of Hamburg he [Gronovius] was a north German like Cornelius Scriblerus, born in Münster" (P. Rogers, "Pope and Martial" 81).

21 For studies of Pope's annotations in the *Iliad* translation, see Crossley, "Pope's *Iliad*"; Foulon, "La critique de l'*Iliade* d'Anne Dacier dans l'*Iliade* d'Alexander Pope"; Gillespie, "Translation and Commentary"; and Hopkins, "A Translator's Annotation". The annotations in the *Iliad* translation provide contextual background information, defend Homer against real and anticipated criticism (e.g. Pope, *Iliad* 1.309n), justify why a certain translation was chosen over another (e.g. 1.41–44n) and, most importantly, comment on the beauties of the text. This latter purpose of Pope's notes is explicitly stated as the primary

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strategies and their functions, there are not many similarities between the notes in these two works, though their layouts have a few features in common.[22] Nevertheless, the *Iliad* commentary is noteworthy for two things: its ambivalence towards ambiguity (which, to some extent, can also be seen in Pope's approach to self-annotating) and its manner of marking passages that are drawn from previous commentators. The latter sheds light on the sometimes confusing (fictional) authorship attributions in the annotations on the *Dunciad*s.

In a note on the very beginning of the *Iliad*, Pope presents a rationale for (scholarly, xenographic) annotating and criticises what he sees as a tendency of commentators to read new and implausible meanings into a text:

> The prevailing Passion of others is to discover *New Meanings* in an Author, whom they will cause to appear mysterious purely for the Vanity of being thought to unravel him. These account it a disgrace to be of the Opinion of those that preceded them; and it is generally the Fate of such People who will never say what was said before, to say what will never be said after them. If they can but find a Word that has once been strain'd by some dark Writer to signify any thing different from its usual Acceptation, it is frequent with them to apply it constantly to that uncommon Meaning, whenever they meet it in a clear Writer: For Reading is so much dearer to them than Sense, that they will discard it at any time to make way for a Criticism. In other Places where they cannot contest the Truth of the common Interpretation, they get themselves room for Dissertation by imaginary *Amphibologies*, which they will have to be design'd by the Author. This Disposition of finding out different Significations in one thing, may be the Effect of either too much, or too little Wit: For Men of a right Understanding generally

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aim of his commentary in the famous note at the very beginning of the first book: unlike other commentators, who had "more Reading than Taste, and were fonder of showing their Variety of Learning in all Kinds, than their single Understanding of Poetry", Pope wants to "comment upon *Homer* as a Poet" (Pope, *Iliad* 1.1n; cf. also Pope, *Corr.* 1: 270). Annotations that comment on the beauty of the *Dunciad*s are extremely rare – those few that exist are usually attributed to Scriblerus and involve him either not grasping or cheekily ignoring the bawdy or insulting overtones of the annotated passages.

22 Neither the *Iliad* translation nor the *Dunciad*s indicate the presence of an annotation in the main text (e.g. by an asterisk or superscript number). The first edition of the *Iliad* in quarto and folio (1715–20) uses endnotes, whereas a 1720–21 reprint in duodecimo uses footnotes, which usually cover more than three-quarters of the page (cf. Gillespie 309; cf. Hopkins 105). The pages in this duodecimo edition look very similar to the pages of the *Dunciad*s, where the footnotes often do not provide space for more than two lines of poetry. Like the *Dunciad*s, the *Iliad* translation includes many paratexts besides the annotations. The translation comprises, among other things, a preface, an "Essay on the Life, Writings, and Learning of Homer", three different indexes, "specially commissioned fold-out maps", short essays like "On Homer's Battles", and a "Geographical Table of the Towns, &c. in Homer's Catalogue of Greece" (Gillespie 299).

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> see at once all that an Author can reasonably mean, but others are apt to fancy Two Meanings for want of knowing One. (Pope, *Iliad* 1.1n1, original emphasis)

Pope's presuppositions for annotating classical texts are hence (1) that texts (at least by "clear Writers") are understood by the majority of readers; (2) that this majority agrees on the meaning of a given text; (3) that this meaning is more or less independent of time, i.e. that readers generally arrive at the same interpretation as "those that preceded them"; and (4) that most ambiguities in a text are invented by inept commentators rather than strategically designed by the author. This rationale, however, is betrayed by Pope's practice. As Maynard Mack points out, many of Pope's annotations in the *Iliad* discuss possible ambiguities and allow readers to choose between different ways of interpreting (and translating) passages (cf. Mack, "Introduction" xc; ci–cii; also see Ossa-Richardson 258–60).

One would expect that Pope's years-long work on the *Iliad*, his frustration with other annotators, and his recognition that – even if a text may originally have been clear and unambiguous – time soon ambiguates any work, had a profound impact on how he approached the annotations on his *Dunciad*s. What better way to spare future editors the trouble he had to go through when working on the *Iliad* than to explicate his own work? What better way to prevent his satire from being (mis)interpreted by future critics than publicly determining its meaning? In 1731, speaking of the *Dunciad*s, he even writes to Jacob Tonson, Sr.:

> In truth I think myself happier in my Commentator [i.e. himself] than either Milton or Shakespear; & shall be very well content if the same hands [i.e. Bentley's and Theobald's] proceed to any other mans works, but my owne, and in this I depend upon your Friendship, & your Interest with your Cosen, that you will not let the Tibbalds ever publish notes upon such things of mine, as are your Property yet, or shall be hereafter. (Pope, *Corr.* 3: 244)[23]

The "Advertisement" for the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* even portrays the commentary as particularly trustworthy: it has "one advantage over most commentaries, [namely] that it is not made upon conjectures, or at a remote distance of time" (1729 *Dunciad* 122; *Dunciad* 373). As will be shown throughout, however, most annotations in the *Dunciad*s achieve the complete opposite of disambiguation: they use a variety of strategies to expand, alter, proliferate, and even

23 An approach to self-annotation that reduces ambiguity and straightforwardly explains the poem is also suggested by Swift in his famous letter to Pope in which he urges him to annotate the *Dunciad*s (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 2: 504–05). For the letter, also see p. 86 below.

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call into question the meaning(s) of individual passages and sometimes of the work as a whole. Pope did not approach the *Dunciad*s as an editor but as a poet. For the most part, his annotations "function[] not simply as a help (or even a guide) to reading the verse but as an intrinsic part of a satiric performance" (Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 194). Thus, both in the *Iliad* and the *Dunciad*s, Pope claims to offer unequivocality in theory, while acknowledging (*Iliad*) and even creating ambiguity (*Dunciad*s) in practice. Yet, Pope still exerts considerable control over the meaning(s) of the *Dunciad*s by determining *how exactly* his work is ambiguated as well as by discussing and refuting contemporaries' attempts at (dis)ambiguating the poem themselves.

Both the notes on the *Dunciad*s and on the *Iliad* translation often refer to the reception of the poems and to previous annotators' notes (see, e.g., Pope, *Iliad* 2.284n). In the case of the *Iliad*, these older notes were, of course, written by real people and could be found in earlier scholarly texts and editions. The annotations in the *Dunciad*s, however, sometimes pretend to react to other editions of the poem that do, in fact, not exist. The way in which the alleged 'quotes' from these non-existent editions are indicated is often rather confusing, especially to first-time readers of the *Dunciad*s. For instance, in the fourth book of the poem, we are confronted with the following annotation on the word "Page":

> There was a Judge of this name, always ready to hang any man, of which he was suffered to give a hundred miserable examples during a long life, even to his dotage. — Tho' the candid *Scriblerus* imagined *Page* here to mean no more than a *Page* or *Mute*, and to allude to the custom of strangling State Criminals in *Turkey* by Mutes or Pages. A practice more decent than that of *our Page*, who before he hanged any person, loaded him with reproachful language. SCRIBL. (*Dunciad* 4.30n, original emphasis)

The note is signed by Scriblerus but talks about him in the third person and criticises his interpretation. As Rumbold notes, "the attribution of the whole to Scriblerus is awkward" (editor's n for *Dunciad* 4.30n).[24]

A look at Pope's *Iliad* clears up the apparent awkwardness. There, we find a few instances in which Pope quotes earlier commentators without using any quotations marks, while acknowledging his source only at the very end of the note, e.g. "The latter Part of this Note belongs to *Eustathius*" (Pope, *Iliad* 7.387n, original emphasis). This practice suggests that we have to imagine the 'authorship' of the Scriblerus annotation above as follows: the fictional Scriblerus

24 For other examples of notes with confusing authorship attributions, see *Dunciad* 2.187n and 4.553n.

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prepared an (in reality non-existent) annotated edition of the *Dunciad*s, in which he interpreted "*Page*" as a reference to Turkish pages or mutes in general. The edition of the *Dunciad*s that we are reading is to be imagined as reacting to Scriblerus's edition and as quoting its 'source' in a way similar to Pope in the *Iliad* translation. Only the second sentence of the note belongs to Scriblerus, while the rest of the annotation is supposed to be written by the editor reacting to him. This editor does not put quotation marks around Scriblerus's argument and only gives his source at the very end of the note. And on the outer level of communication, readers are confronted with the comical situation of Pope criticising his own elucidation of his poem.

Though it may seem like a very minor point, the puzzling authorship attributions in the *Dunciad*s are likely to cause confusion among readers and, in at least one case, are used by Pope to strategically ambiguate whether Scriblerus is changing his mind mid-way through an annotation or whether there is another 'editor' involved in this specific note (see p. 187 n below).

In summary, throughout the *Dunciad*s, Pope's xenographic models come up in subtle (Brossette, Schrevelius) and not so subtle ways (Bentley, Theobald). Echoes of them can be found in the layout of his notes (Brossette, Schrevelius, *Iliad*), the juxtaposition of many different voices (Schrevelius, *Iliad*), the sometimes-confusing manner of indicating quotes (*Iliad*) and, most importantly, the imitations and parodies of Bentley's and Theobald's xenographic notes which are used for various satirical purposes.

2.1.1.2 Self-Annotations in the Mock-Heroic and the Satiric Tradition

The *Dunciad*s are not the first mock-heroic,[25] mock-editorial, and satirical work to feature self-annotations. In fact, Pope's notes are part of several centuries-old European traditions of literary annotation, but they take these traditions to their extremes. The copiousness of Pope's notes, the number of strategies used in, and functions served by, them – all of these are unprecedented even in his most elaborate literary models.

25 In what follows, I use the term mock-heroic rather than mock-epic because the former better describes the *Dunciad*s. Mock-heroic works "acknowledge[] the cultural authority of serious epic by using its devices to ridicule the actions of lowly beings […], while mock epic implies a critical attitude to serious epic as such, and thus tends to oppose and subvert its authority" (R. Robertson 5). Some of the works discussed below, however, might qualify as mock-epics rather than mock-heroics.

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Alessandro Tassoni's La secchia rapita

Alessandro Tassoni's *La secchia rapita* (1622) is usually credited with being the first modern mock-heroic poem (cf. Terry 11).[26] It enjoyed considerable success and, in 1710, was translated into English by John Ozell. Pope knew *La secchia rapita* through Ozell's translation and even based his episode of Jove's closestool in the *Dunciad*s (2.83–109) on a passage in the second canto of Tassoni's poem (cf. Highet 327).

On its title page, Tassoni's work declares that it contains the "dichiarazioni [explanations] del signor Gasparo Salviani". Like Richard Bentley and Lewis Theobald who make numerous appearances in the *Dunciad*s, Salviani was a real person and – like them – he had (most likely)[27] no hand in the annotations that are attributed to him (cf. Besomi, "L'autocommento" 53). The difference between Tassoni's and Pope's use of real persons as annotators is that most of the annotations attributed to Bentley and Theobald serve to ridicule them, which is not the case in *La secchia rapita*. Gasparo Salviani was a friend of Tassoni and 'his' annotations generally provide helpful information about the poem. Hence, Tassoni's annotations can be seen as more or less serious, scholarly notes on a comical work and, thus, as self-annotations that adhere to the conventions of xenographic annotations. In his article "L'autocommento nella *Secchia rapita*", Ottavio Besomi provides an extensive overview of the different functions fulfilled by Tassoni's annotations. These include linguistic annotations (e.g. about dialect words), direct addresses to the reader, metanarrative comments (e.g. drawing attention to anachronisms and instances of poetic licence), contextual and historical background information, and intertextual references (Besomi, "L'autocommento" 54–55). According to Carlo Caruso, the notes and the fact that they were attributed to a "respected member of the Roman literary world" like Gaspare Salviani also "allowed not only for the defence or justification of the re-introduction of censored passages, but also to revive variant readings which had never been printed and had circulated only in manuscript form" (Caruso 405). The incorporation of variants (real or invented) is also used for satirical purposes in the *Dunciad*s. All in all, Tassoni's work can be credited with drawing Pope's attention to the connection between mock-heroic poetry and (pseudonymous) self-annotation long before he started composing the *Dunciad*s.

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26 There are, of course, earlier mock-heroic works like *Don Quixote* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The oldest known mock-heroic poem is the *Batrachomyomachia, or Battle of the Frogs and the Mice*, which, in Pope's time, was attributed to Homer.

27 For a discussion regarding the authorship of the *dichiarazioni*, see Tassoni lxxi n34.

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Earlier Mock-Heroic Poems in English

By the end of the seventeenth century, mock-heroic poems had become popular in England. Even though not all mock-heroic poems in Pope's time were annotated (a notable example of an un-annotated one is Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*),[28] there is a substantial tradition of self-annotated English mock-heroics before the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum*. Early examples include James Scudamore's *Homer à la Mode* and Charles Cotton's *Scarronides: or, Virgile travestie* (both 1664). In these works, the annotations quote the Latin and Greek passages that are imitated in the main text. A slightly later example of a self-annotated mock-heroic is James Farewell's *The Irish Hudibras, or, Fingallian Prince* (1689) which provides Latin quotes from the *Aeneid* in the footnotes and uses marginal notes to summarise passages as well as to translate dialect words.

Self-annotated mock-heroics remained popular in Pope's time. Thomas Tooly's *Homer in a Nutshell: or, the Iliad of Homer in Immortal Doggrel* (1715) again uses footnotes to quote from the original text.[29] One example from this poem shows how – at least for readers who knew Greek – the annotations emphasise the ridiculous contrast between original and mock-epic: for his line "And canst thou Sleep, thou Son of *Jocky*?", Tooly provides the note "υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἱπποδάμοιο" (Tooly 25, original emphasis).[30] The annotation hence makes readers aware of the fact that the mock-heroic has turned a – literally translated – 'fiery horse-tamer' into a mere *Jocky*, i.e. a horse-dealer or rider (with the additional meaning of "crafty or fraudulent bargainer") (*OED*, "jockey, *n.*").

In the *Dunciad*s, Pope follows the mock-heroic convention of quoting the literary sources that he is imitating in his annotations. Nevertheless, the passages from classical and canonical modern texts that he prints in the "Imitations" section of his notes are generally longer and more numerous than those in earlier mock-heroics. Pope's most important innovation, however, occurs in the "Remarks" section of his annotations: the length, number, and variety (in terms

28 Dryden did, however, annotate some of his other works: *Religio laici* has a few brief marginal notes that summarise passages of the main text, while *The Hind and the Panther* provides a handful of notes containing citations and brief explanations. *Annus mirabilis* is more extensively annotated than the other two, and its layout is especially interesting since the annotations appear directly below the annotated stanza rather than at the bottom of the page. These notes offer explanations, identify intertextual references, and provide summaries of the poem.

29 Pat Rogers suspects that *Homer in a Nutshell* was actually written by Pope's friend John Arbuthnot or even by Pope himself (cf. Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher* 89).

30 In the original Greek text, the expression appears in book 2, line 23 of the *Iliad*. I am grateful to Elisabeth Schedel for helping me to identify the Greek quote.

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of strategies and functions) of the notes included there is without precedent in the field of mock-heroic poetry.

English and French Mock-Commentaries

The practice of commenting on one's own works in the persona of a garrulous, pedantic, and often inept annotator predates the *Dunciad*s.[31] An early example is *The Loves of Hero and Leander, a Mock Poem: with Marginal Notes, and Other Choice Pieces of Drollery* (1653) which is attributed to a certain James Smith. Even though it is a mock-heroic poem based on classical literature, its annotations are very different from the ones discussed above. There are usually no

31 As Carlo Caruso remarks in his article "Mockery and Erudition", "[j]ocular exegesis [though not always *self*-exegesis] had emerged as a recognisable genre in sixteenth-century Tuscany and Central Italy, together with a reinvigorated tradition of comic poetry" (Caruso 411). This tradition is discussed in more detail in Corsaro and Procaccioli (eds.), *Cum notibusse et comentaribusse*. It is not clear whether Pope knew any of these Italian mock-commentaries. In Pope's time, there were also many German parodies of learned annotations which were most likely not known to him. For instance, *Das ABC cum notis variorum* (1695) makes fun of Dutch variorum editions and provides, as the title suggests, notes 'by various hands' on each letter of the alphabet.

After the publication of the heavily annotated 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, mock-commentaries remained highly popular throughout Europe. One famous work featuring a mock-apparatus is Christian Ludwig Liscow's *Kurtze, aber dabey deutliche und erbauliche Anmerckungen, über die klägliche Geschichte, von der jämmerlichen Zerstöhrung der Stadt Jerusalem* [*Short but Clear and Edifying Notes About the Pitiful Tale of the Woeful Destruction of the City of Jerusalem*, my translation] (1732). The title page of the volume announces that the annotations were written after the manner of Liscow's enemy Heinrich Jakob Sivers. The facetious notes often provide explanations and qualifications of completely obvious passages; for instance, for the lemma "he screamed without stopping", an annotation clarifies that sometimes he had to breathe in and that in these moments he did not scream. For studies of Liscow's satire, see Martens, "Von Thomasius bis Lichtenberg" *passim*; Mulsow, *Die unanständige Gelehrtenrepublik* 50–51; and Eckstein 106–07. Another German author, Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener, published two satires on annotating: *Von der Vortrefflichkeit der Glückwünschungsschreiben* [*On the Egregiousness of Congratulatory Letters*, my translation] (1741) and *Hinkmars von Repkow Noten ohne Text* [*Hinkmar von Repkow's Notes Without Text*, my translation] (1745). The annotations in the former are ascribed to "Martin Scribler dem Jüngeren [the younger]" – a direct reference to Pope's Martinus Scriblerus. The latter work is noteworthy in that the annotations do not refer to any main text; the alleged author Hinkmar von Repkow argues that the main text of a work is usually negligible and that the only part of a book worth preserving are the notes. Hinkmar claims that writing annotations is the easiest and surest way to achieve immortal fame, which is why he did not bother to write a main text which his notes could explain. For Rabener's parodies of annotations, see Eckstein 104–14; Koppenfels, *Der andere Blick* 259; Pfersmann, "La secte des autonotistes" 75–84; and Zubarik, "Präsenter Mangel" 34–37. For mock-books in the Augustan age, see Rawson, "The Mock Edition Revisited" and Walsh, "Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and the Mock Book".

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references to ancient source texts; instead, the annotations are mainly concerned with stating the obvious. For instance, when Leander is pursued by a shad, the annotator explains: "Here the author pitieth Leander, and despiseth the Fish" (J. Smith 16). The loquacious commentator is also fond of addressing readers directly.

A similar manner of mock-annotation appears in Walter Pope's (not related to A. Pope) *The Salisbury Ballad: With Curious, Learned and Critical Notes* (1676) (cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" xl). For instance, instead of identifying an allusion, the annotator persona teases the reader: "If you have patience till you come to the nineteenth Stanza of the Second Part, you will know what this Bishops [sic] name is" (W. Pope 1). At other points, he turns the neutral diction of the main text into an insult. For instance, when annotating the line "You first made the *Salisbury* men understand", the annotator glosses 'understand' as "Beat it into their heads" (W. Pope 1, original emphasis). Elsewhere, the eccentric commentator is quite similar to A. Pope's annotator personas Scriblerus and Bentley: he reads more into the text than is there, wildly speculates about possible interpretations, annotates what is completely obvious, and expresses his personal judgment of the poem in his notes: "I find now I praised the Poet too soon; for this is an impudent and unmannerly supposition, and I approve it not; though it is something mollified by those words *perhaps* and *your Worships*" (W. Pope 1, original emphasis).

Despite these amusing examples, the only work before the *Dunciad*s that takes its mock-apparatus to the same extremes as Pope's satire is Thémiseul de Saint-Hyacinthe's 1714 *Chef d'œuvre d'un inconnu, poëme heureusement découvert & mis au jour avec des remarques savantes & recherchées* (*The Master-Piece of an Unknown Author, Luckily Discovered and Brought to Light With Learned and Distinguished Remarks*, my translation). Surprisingly, it has only rarely been mentioned as a precursor to the *Dunciad*s.[32] Nevertheless, it is very likely that Pope knew the work through his friend Bolingbroke, who was personally acquainted with Saint-Hyacinthe (cf. Barrell 32). If we are to believe Saint-Hyacinthe's authorship attribution, Bolingbroke even contributed a short mock-congratulatory poem that was included among the prefatory material of the *Chef d'œuvre*.[33]

32 For an exception, see Correard, "La parodie satirique du discours critique au XVIII[e] siècle", and Correard, "Pots-pourris de vers et de proses". Lynch, in his article "Preventing Play", also briefly discusses the work (cf. 381–82).

33 The poem attributed to Bolingbroke is titled "To the ingenious & Learned Doctor MATANASIUS, on his most elaborate commentary in the Excellent Master-piece of an unknown Author". It is an altered version of Bolingbroke's preface to Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid* and is signed 'H.D.B.A.A.S.' in the first edition and 'Henricus de Bolinbroke

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Saint-Hyacinthe's elaborate paratextual apparatus in the *Chef d'œuvre* revolves around a brief poem of five stanzas which has 40 lines in total. The poem relates how a man called Colin (who is implied to suffer from a venereal disease) visits his mistress for a secret nightly tryst and leaves in the morning lest her father should detect him. The two pages of verse then spark a commentary of 179 (!) pages (numbers based on the 1714 first edition) which strives to show the excellence of the poem and makes the simple text much more complicated than it is. Two annotations from the very beginning of the poem ("L'autre jour, Colin malade / Dedans son lit, / D'une grosse maladie") will illustrate this approach. Annotating the expression "grosse maladie", the commentator praises the author's word choice:

> Ce *Grosse* est bien choisi. Si cette maladie était petite, on ne s'en embarrasserait pas; mais le mot Grosse intéresse tout à fait. *Malade d'une grosse maladie*. Ce plénoasme relevé par le mot *Grosse* émeut la compassion du lecteur, le touche. (Saint-Hyacinthe 66, original emphasis)[34]

The naive annotator here misses the meaning of "grosse" as "venereal" (syphilis was also called *grosse vérole*) and instead only reads "grosse" as the opposite of "petite". The fact that he singles out the inept expression "malade d'une grosse maladie" for special praise further contributes to his ridiculousness. Moreover, the editor's unconscious introduction of a bawdy subtext (the sickness physically 'touching' the reader) adds to the humour of the note. Annotating the second line of the poem, the commentator thinks that even the word "lit" (bed) requires clarification: "Ce mot a un grand nombre de significations. On dit un *lit de plume*, un *lit de repose*, un *lit de gazon*, un *lit de fleurs*. Et lit dans ce cas se prend pour la chose sur laquelle on couche" (Saint-Hyacinthe 66, original emphasis).[35] The note thus mocks how some annotators approach ambiguities that are present in the language system but not at all actualised in the passages that they are commenting on. The inept commentator overlooks the

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[sic], Annæ à Secretis' in later editions (cf. Barrell 6). The modern editor of the *Chef d'œuvre* explains that it is unknown how Bolingbroke came to participate in the work but believes that the attribution of the congratulatory poem to him is correct (cf. editor's n in Saint-Hyacinthe 30).

34 "This *Grosse* is well chosen. If this illness had been minor, it would not have embarrassed one; but the word Grosse immediately awakens your interest. *Sick of a great sickness.* This pleonasm emphasised by the word *Grosse* fills the reader with compassion, it touches him" (my translation, original emphasis).

35 "This word has a great number of meanings. One says a *featherbed*, a *day bed*, a *bed of grass*, a *bed of flowers*. And bed in this case means the thing in which one sleeps" (my translation, original emphasis).

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'functional' ambiguity (*grosse*) and instead dwells on the irrelevant one (*lit*). Other annotations in *Chef d'œuvre* discuss moral questions that are allegedly raised by the poem, enter into lengthy grammatical, stylistic, and etymological discussions, compare the annotated poem to classical and canonical French works, and allow the annotator to introduce personal anecdotes about himself (cf. Bessire, "Les suites comiques de l'érudition" 246–47; Branca-Rosoff *passim*).

Apart from an excessive number of parodic annotations, *Chef d'œuvre* also contains a wealth of other mock-paratextual matter.[36] At the beginning of the work, we find the approbations of different censors, congratulatory poems in various languages (including Bolingbroke's), a dedication to Saint-Hyacinthe's enemy Samuel Masson, a preface, and an index of proper names. At the end of the volume, we are presented with "Nouvelles Remarques" by other critics who allegedly have seen the manuscript of the work, a "Lettre à Monsieur, le duc de …", a dissertation on Homer and Chapelain, a table of books and manuscripts cited in the volume, an index of subjects, and a compilation of errata.

Saint-Hyacinthe's *Chef d'œuvre* was immensely successful; it inspired several other parodies of scholarly editions and was one of the best-selling fictional works in eighteenth-century France (cf. Bessire, "Les suites comiques de l'érudition" 248–53; Branca-Rosoff 553; Mulsow, *Unanständige Gelehrtenrepublik* 54). The popularity of the work, Saint-Hyacinthe's acquaintance with Bolingbroke, and the fact that the author spent the years from 1722 to 1734 in England, make it very likely that Pope knew the *Chef d'œuvre*. However, regardless of how similar the extensive commentaries and paratextual apparatuses of the *Dunciad*s and the *Chef d'œuvre* may appear, there is a crucial difference between Saint-Hyacinthe's and Pope's annotations. In the case of the *Chef d'œuvre*, the annotated poem is very easy to understand; it does not need any explanation. The notes are exclusively employed to mock pedantic scholarship. In the case of the *Dunciad*s, however, the sophisticated and allusive main text *does* require elucidation and the majority of its annotations indeed provide information that in some way or another furthers, modifies, and complicates our understanding of the poem. Saint-Hyacinthe's commentary has almost no other function but to mock annotators; Pope's, however, is multifunctional.

Self-Annotation in the Scriblerus Club

Pope was not the first among his friends of the Scriblerus Club to annotate his own works. (For the founding, purpose, and members of the Scriblerus Club,

36 For a detailed discussion of these paratexts, see Lelouch, "Le péritexte au service de la formation des esprits".

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see p. 146 below.) Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* first appeared in 1704 but did not have many notes until the publication of the fifth edition in 1710.[37] It seems that Swift had first planned to print the annotations as a separate 'key' at the end of the volume, but his publisher Benjamin Tooke convinced him to print them as footnotes (cf. Swift, *Corr.* 1: 283). Swift's practice of first publishing a very sparsely annotated work only to add a multitude of notes later may to some extent have inspired Pope's similar approach in the *Dunciads.* In the fifth edition, Swift employs both unsigned notes written by himself and extracts from his enemy William Wotton's *Observations Upon the Tale of a Tub* (cf. Flint 644–45; cf. Pfersmann, *Séditions infrapaginales* 170–73). Surprisingly, the notes taken from Wotton usually provide helpful information and are a far cry from the ludicrous extracts from his enemies' comments that Pope appended to his *Dunciad*s (cf. Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 182). Nevertheless, by incorporating the work's reception in the notes, Swift here again prefigures Pope. Despite the fact that the annotations in *A Tale of a Tub* perform quite different functions than those in the *Dunciad*s, the general method of Swift's and Pope's satires is similar: "the first edition attracts material used in subsequent editions that neutralize criticism by demonstrating authorial control over it" (Fanning 375).

John Gay's *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716) has marginal notes which usually provide summaries of passages and only very rarely offer explanations. Both the place and the function of the notes hence hark back to older self-annotated works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was only in the third edition (1730) that the marginalia became footnotes and that those annotations which only contained summaries were omitted. Gay's *The Shepherd's Week* (1728) is much more extensively annotated than *Trivia*. The notes mostly contain explanations of archaic words and often provide

37 One year earlier, in 1709, Swift had also published *A Famous Prediction of Merlin, the British Wizard: Written Above a Thousand Years Ago, and Relating to the Present Year, 1709. With Explanatory Notes. By T. N. Philomath*, which was reprinted in the 1711 Miscellany. The annotations appended to this alleged prophecy are usually plausible and provide helpful information. However, at one point the annotator pretends to be conspicuously ignorant. In his note for the lines "And Norways pryd agayne shall marreye. / And from the Tree where Blosums fele, / Ripe fruit shall come, and all is wele", the annotator admits: "I cannot guess who is meant by *Norway's Pride*, perhaps the Reader may, as well as the Sense of the Two following Lines" (Swift, "A Famous Prediction of Merlin, the British Wizard" 12–14n). It might have been dangerous to spell out the reference to Queen Anne's many miscarriages – hence the note that, by pretending not to give any information, in fact alerts readers to the right reading. Such feigned ignorance is also sometimes employed in the *Dunciad*s, when the annotations deny a rather obvious risqué allusion and claim that the main text refers to something entirely different.

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further information about their etymology or refer to Chaucer to exemplify the use of these words. In this, they are comparable to the notes in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*. Similar to the *Dunciad*s from 1729 onwards, Gay's work also contains an index of personal names, plants, animals, etc. mentioned in the poem. Most importantly for the comparison with Pope, Gay's commentary also identifies intertextual references to Virgil and Theocritus. Hence, the burlesque pastoral poem *The Shepherd's Week* – like the mock-epic *Dunciad*s – both parodies a genre and, in the notes, nevertheless reverentially refers to the classical texts that define it.

Thomas Parnell's *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice, with the Remarks of Zoilus* (1717)[38] contains both Parnell's translation of the extant fragments of this mock-epic and, among other paratexts, Parnell's satirical annotations. In these, the translator 'quotes' and ridicules the comments on the poem made by Zoilus (an ancient scholar and detractor of Homer), which he allegedly discovered in an old manuscript.[39] The comments by Zoilus are, however, not based on anything the actual Zoilus wrote but were authored by Parnell. Like some annotations in the *Dunciad*s (see above, p. 60), the notes in Parnell's mock-edition hence pretend to record and react to earlier critics' remarks. The ways in which Parnell's *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* and Pope's *Dunciad*s introduce these made-up 'older' comments are also quite similar. For instance, in Parnell we learn that

> [t]his Simile makes ZOILUS, who sets up for a profess'd Enemy of Fables, to exclaim violently. *We had*, says he, *a Frog and House hitherto, and now we get a Bull and a Princess to illustrate their Actions: When will there be an End to this Fabling-Folly and Poetry, which I value myself for being unacquainted with?* (Parnell 101, original emphasis)

And in the *Dunciad*s, we are informed that

> [h]ere the learned Scriblerus manifests great anger; he exclaims against all such *Conjectural Emendations* in this manner: 'Let it suffice, O Pallas! that every noble Ancient, *Greek* or *Roman*, hath suffered the impertinent correction of every *Dutch*, *German*, and *Switz* Schoolmaster![']' (*Dunciad* 2.187n, original emphasis)

38 In the Augustan age, the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* was believed to have been written by Homer.

39 The main aim of Parnell's notes is, however, not to ridicule the lost writings of an ancient critic but to attack those modern commentators who, in Parnell's opinion, resemble Zoilus in their incompetence, literal-mindedness, and desire to aggrandise themselves by detracting from great authors; Parnell also uses the notes to defend Pope's translations of Homer against his enemies (cf. Braund 565–66).

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It is very likely that Parnell's practice of inventing and then referring to 'older' annotations had some influence on Pope. Nevertheless, Parnell's brief work never achieves the intricacy of Pope's *Dunciad*s apparatus, in which various invented commentators fight amongst each other, real critics' remarks are quoted, misquoted, and made up, fictional annotators react to actual writers, and actual writers to fictional annotators.

This brief (and by no means complete) overview of earlier self-annotated satirical, mock-heroic, and mock-editorial works shows that self-annotation was a rather common and established practice in humorous works when the first (still sparsely annotated) version of the *Dunciad*s was published in 1728. Several elements of Pope's much more elaborate 1729 commentary can be found in these models: attributing one's self-annotations to someone else (Tassoni), including "Imitations" annotations (Scudamore, Cotton, Farewell, Tooly, Gay), parodying inept editors (Saint-Hyacinthe, Parnell), inventing and reacting to earlier notes (Parnell), as well as delaying annotation and incorporating the work's reception among the notes (Swift). Most of Pope's influences, however, employed not more than one or two of these textual strategies in a single work. He used all of them and many more, and in a much more elaborate fashion than the models he drew on. Pope did not invent literary self-annotation, but he brought the practice to a completely different level.

2.1.1.3 'Keys' to Satires

The annotations in the *Dunciad*s not only make the works appear like scholarly editions (or literary imitations and transformations of such editions) but also as 'keys' to the covert references in the poem. Satires in Pope's time often included obscure allusions and 'gutted' names (i.e. names with several letters omitted). Hence, readers usually required a great deal of insider knowledge in order to identify the victims of these satires. As Heather Jackson explains, it was "a kind of parlor-game" for readers to try to fill in the gutted names in their own copies[40] – either by recourse to their personal knowledge or by resorting to so-called keys (Jackson, *Marginalia* 57). Such keys – short publications which promised to identify the people and events alluded to in a satire – were prepared by dubious Grub Street booksellers like Edmund Curll,[41] by authors'

40 Pope himself filled in some of the names in his copy of the Earl of Rochester's poems (cf. Jackson, *Marginalia* 57).

41 Curll was the most scandalous bookseller of the Augustan age and one of Pope's long-time enemies. He specialised in pornography, pirate copies, the unauthorised publication of private (and even secret) writings after their authors' death, and unauthorised biographies, with a bit of sedition and blasphemy sprinkled here and there. For an extensive overview of his life, publications, and business practices, see Baines and P. Rogers,

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friends, and occasionally even by the authors of the satires themselves (cf. Bricker 903–04).[42] The accuracy of keys varied greatly, and "spurious, unauthorized keys materialized in the wake of every popular book" (Gallagher 124).

Keys rarely spanned more than a few pages, and they usually did not reprint the satires that they were 'unlocking'. Their publication as separate commentaries makes these keys quite different from Pope's two other models (i.e. xenographic notes in scholarly editions and earlier self-annotations) discussed above. Furthermore, unlike xenographic notes prepared by professional editors, the keys were rarely guided by considerations of factuality and scholarly principles. Instead, they are often gossipy, sensationalist, overtly partisan, and engaged in facetious guessing-games. Hence, the *Dunciad*s inscribe themselves in two vastly different xenographic traditions: the more or less reliable, good-faith approach of scholarly editions and the playfully unreliable keys to satires. This mix of traditions may be seen as one reason for the equally mixed editorial apparatus in the *Dunciad*s which offers both factual and deliberately misleading information, both straightforward and ironical comments (and many cases in which the question of seriousness or irony remains ambiguous).

One example of how a satire strategically engaged with its keys deserves special mention here due to its impact on Pope's satiric practice in the *Dunciad*s: Samuel Garth's mock-epic *The Dispensary* (1699).[43] This work illustrates the different stages that satirical works sometimes underwent in the gradual revelation of their victims. *The Dispensary* contains many gutted names, most of which were first (and not always accurately) spelled out in a pirated edition of 1709 (cf. P. Rogers, "The Publishing History of Garth's *Dispensary*" 173). The first separate key for the poem seems to have appeared as late as in 1714, and it is possible that Garth had helped his friends prepare it (cf. Colomb 60). This key was finally included in the posthumous tenth edition of the poem in 1730. The strategy to first publish a satire with gutted names, to wait for the appearance of different keys, and then to identify the victims oneself is also employed by Pope in the *Dunciad*s. Hence, in providing the notes for the *Dunciad*s only one year after the first publication of the poem, Pope "refined and developed a structure already present in *The Dispensary*" (Colomb 60). In contrast to the *Dunciad*s, however, the annotations in the key to *The Dispensary* are usually

Edmund Curll, Bookseller as well as Straus, *The Unspeakable Curll*. For a detailed history of his enmity with Pope, see P. Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher*.

42 Pope himself capitalised on – and ridiculed – this fashion for keys in 1715 when he published *A Key to the Lock* […] *By Esdras Barnivelt*, which claimed to have found a "dangerous tendency […] to government and religion" in his own *Rape of the Lock*.

43 Pope discusses the similarities between *The Dispensary* and the *Dunciad*s in *Dunciad* 2.140n.

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very brief and do not provide much background information on the victims. Yet again, the comparison with a precursor shows what is innovative about Pope's commentary – rather than just providing his victims' names, the annotations offer exceedingly detailed (and not always trustworthy) information on his enemies.

2.1.2 *Self-Annotations and Censorship: The Importance of Ambiguity*

Pope's practice of identifying his enemies by name and of referring to their (real, exaggerated, rumoured, or invented) transgressions entailed a certain legal risk.[44] In what follows, I will outline the legal situation at the time when the *Dunciad*s were published and explain to what extent satirists could (or could not) employ self-annotations to ambiguate 'dangerous' passages in order to evade prosecution. I will also briefly consider three notes in the *Dunciad*s that might be read as safety mechanisms against accusations of libel. One of them will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.2.1.[45] As will be shown, there was no consensus among Pope's contemporaries over what measures exactly satirists could take to protect themselves against the law. For this reason, I will not argue that Pope *definitely* used certain self-annotations to avoid censorship or even being tried in a court of law. Rather, this chapter is meant to provide readers with enough background knowledge to draw their own conclusions about the dangerousness of the passages and the 'defensive powers' of the annotations that will be discussed in the course of my entire section on Pope.

Pre-publication censorship in England was abolished in 1695 (except for stage plays); hence writers, printers, and booksellers in Pope's time could only be indicted after a work had been published (cf. Brewer and McCalman 199–200).[46] In Pope's age, it was illegal to

44 When planning the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum*, Pope was afraid of its potential repercussions and asked lawyer Nicholas Fazakerley to peruse the poem in order to make sure that it contained nothing libellous (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 2: 532; *Corr.* 3: 4–5, 236; Greene 168, 176; Foxon 110; Sh. Rogers 282). Fazakerley's copy of two sheets of the 1729 *Dunciad*, in which he was asked to mark or change anything that could lead to an indictment, is, unfortunately, not extant. Hence, we cannot know what (if anything) Fazakerley objected to in the yet unpublished *Dunciad Variorum*, and whether Pope used the lawyer's feedback to add annotations that shielded him from accusations of libel. In order to avoid undue speculation, I will not claim that specific notes were definitely employed in order avoid legal problems.

45 In chapter 2.2.1, however, no mention will be made of Pope's possible legal reasons for ironically protesting his innocence in the note; the chapter is only concerned with Pope's attempt at provoking and ridiculing his enemies even further.

46 Thomas Keymer argues that the abandonment of pre-publication censorship led to less rather than more freedom for authors since, from 1695 onwards, "no author could know

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> question the legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession or to support the claims of the Stuarts; […] it was illegal to make personal attacks on the king or the immediate members of the royal family; and […] it was, in some circumstances, and especially in time of war, illegal to make extreme attacks on the conduct of foreign or military policy. (Feather 89–90)

Seditious libel, i.e. "any printed reflection on the government, irrespective of its truth, that functioned to disturb the peace" (Parsons 25), and *scandalum magnatum*, i.e. an "utterance or publication of a malicious report against any person holding a position of dignity" were also illegal (*OED* "scandalum magnatum, *n.*"). It was likewise libellous to (1) accuse someone of a crime punishable in the common law courts; (2) claim that someone suffered from leprosy, the plague, or syphilis; (3) assert that someone was unfit for his professional trade; (4) impute "that a trader was insolvent or bankrupt"; and (5) to accuse someone of "misconduct in an office of profit, which would lead to dismissal" (Holdsworth 8: 348–50). A much vaguer definition of libel also includes anything written that holds someone up to "scorn and ridicule, and still more to any stronger feeling of contempt or execration" (Holt 175). What did *not* count as libel was asserting someone's incompetence in a profession that was "merely a temporary employment, or an employment of a menial nature" rather than a "definite calling recognized by the law" (Holdsworth 8: 349).[47] Hence, simply denying another writer's talent did not constitute libel.

When a potentially libellous text was scrutinised in court, prosecutors employed so-called *innuendos* to determine the meaning of the text. A contemporary definition of the term in Giles Jacob's *A New Law-Dictionary* (1729) illustrates the practice and hints at the important role that ambiguity and disambiguation played in it. An innuendo is

> a Word used in Declarations and Law Pleadings, to ascertain a Person or Thing which was named before; as to say he (*Innuendo* the Plaintiff) did so and so […] [.] An *Innuendo* is in Effect no more than a *Predict*, and cannot make that certain which was uncertain before; and the Law will not allow Words to be enlarged by an *Innuendo* […][.] In Slander, both the Person and scandalous Words ought to be certain and not want an *Innuendo* to make them out: […][.] And if the Plaintiff allege that the Defendant said to him, *Thou art a forsworn Man, and didst make a false Oath against me before Justice* Scawen, (*Innuendo Scawen*, a Justice of Peace) Action doth not lie, for it is not shewn that *Scawen* was a Justice

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his crime until after committing it", and prosecution was generally "arbitrary" and "unpredictable" (Keymer 19; 23). As a consequence, "within a few years of the 1695 lapse, prosecution for seditious libel had become central as never before" (Keymer 96).

47 For a more detailed overview of libel laws in the Augustan age, see Podhurst, *The Scriblerians Uncensored*, and Keymer, *Poetics of the Pillory*.

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> of Peace, otherwise than by the *Innuendo*, and there may be a Man whose Name is *Justice Scawen.* (G. Jacob, *A New Law-Dictionary* n.pag., original emphasis)

An innuendo was hence "supposed to point out the reference of a word without attempting to interpret the word" (Roper 24).[48] The latter part of Jacob's definition hints at the *mitior sensus* doctrine (frequently invoked by defendants and their lawyers), which ruled that ambiguous expressions used in a potential libel had to be interpreted in the most innocent, non-defamatory way possible (cf. Helmholz 133; Plucknett 495; Podhurst 88–89).[49]

It is contested whether and to what extent satirists in Pope's age could rely on this doctrine of the 'benefit of the doubt'. C. R. Kropf argues that ambiguous expressions were, as a rule, indeed read *in mitiori sensu* throughout the eighteenth century and that "the innuendo by itself could not be used legally to identify a satiric victim no matter how apparent its meaning might be to the satirist's audience" (Kropf 164). However, several cases in Pope's time cast doubt on this optimistic evaluation and suggest that the "scope of *in mitiori sensu* was increasingly restricted" (R. Reynolds 476). In the 1706 trial against Joseph Browne, it was ruled that the use of irony offered no protection to the satirist and that the "standard to be used by the jury was the understanding given to the writing by all the world" (Hamburger 739; cf. Keymer 123). In the case *Queen* v. *William Hunt* (1713), it was determined that 'gutted' names, i.e. names from which several letters were dropped (e.g. "W--p--le"), did not protect the satirist against prosecution when they were formed "in such a Manner, that from what goes before and follows after, it must needs be understood to signify such a particular Person" (Hawkins 194).[50] Hence, the 'surroundings'

48 For the function of innuendos, also see *March's Actions for Slander, and Arbitrements* (1674) (cf. March 102–06).

49 For an intriguing study of the use of ambiguity to avoid censorship in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, see Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*. For an historical overview of the question of interpretation with regard to libel, see Mitchell, *The Making of the Modern Law of Defamation* 31–51.

50 For the case *Queen* v. *Hurt* also see Lund 246–47; Bricker 892–96; Hyland 866–72; and Holt 236. In the same year, in "The Importance of the Guardian Considered", Swift had still argued that "we have several Ways here of abusing one another, without incurring the Danger of the Law. First, we are careful never to print a Man's Name out at length; but as I do that of Mr. *St—le*: So that although every Body alive knows whom I mean, the Plaintiff can have no Redress in any Court of Justice" (Swift, "Importance of the Guardian Considered" 229, original emphasis). Even though 'gutted' names offered not much legal protection anymore, they were still used throughout the eighteenth- and early nineteenth century, often to make a text appear more secretive and scandalous (cf. Toner 58; Elkin 122; Lund 247; Jackson, *Romantic Readers* 222). Also see Addison's reflection on this strategy in the *Spectator* (vol. 8, no. 567, 14 July 1714).

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of a gutted name had to be sufficiently ambiguous in order to provide legal protection. One year later, in the case *Harrison* v. *Thornborough,* Chief Justice Thomas Parker argued that "the rule now was that words shall be taken in the sense that the hearers understood them, and not *in mitiori sensu* as formerly" (Bricker 894; cf. also R. Reynolds 475–76).[51] In 1727, then, it was decided that it was on the defendants to convincingly argue that their writings could be understood in a non-libellous sense – "the defendant had the burden of proof" (Hamburger 739; cf. also Holt 233). All of these decisions made it easier for prosecutors to classify satirical texts as libels, and many of Pope's contemporaries argued that innuendos were now even used to interpret their writings in the *worst* way possible. The opposition newspaper *The Craftsman* (no. 89, 16 Mar. 1728), for example, reflects that a "Man, who hath a good Nose at an INNUENDO, smells *Treason* and *Sedition* in the most *innocent Words* that can be put together" ("Sir, you were pleased", original emphasis).[52]

The only ruling in Pope's time that can be seen as favourable to satirists was given in the case of *James* v. *Givin* (1713). Here, it was decided that an attack did not count as libel "if the defendant could show 'reasonable provocation, such as might move an honest and good man' to retaliate" (Kropf 165). It has even been suggested that this might have been one of the reasons why Pope so diligently collected his enemies' attacks against himself, namely to quote them in the notes and other paratexts of the *Dunciad*s in order to justify his harsh treatment of the dunces (cf. Kropf 165–66; Sh. Rogers 279–80).

As Keymer points out, even though rulings and legal textbooks after 1706 suggested that the *mitior sensus* principle was no longer used, "things on the ground were messier" than theory suggested, and many authors "still assumed that well-executed irony could constitute adequate protection" (Keymer 126; cf. 123–25). As a consequence, many satirists continued to strategically employ ambiguity and to "cultivate complex literary strategies of indirection, or even on

51 A few years earlier, the *mitior sensus* doctrine had still been in use: in 1706, Chief Justice Holt had argued that "when one Construction shall be innocent, and another Construction of the same Words criminal, the favourable Interpretation shall always be taken" (qtd. in Lund 247) and "in 1700, the Attorney General declined to bring a prosecution […] on the ground that the defendant had used 'covert names'" (Hamburger 750).

52 A similar sentiment is expressed in an article in *The True Briton* (no. 65, 13 Jan. 1724): "AN *Innuendo* in the Hands and Management of such a *Political* Lawyer as I have been describing above, carries with it an uncontrollable Force, and bears down before it the most Innocent Writer in the World, whom such an artful Pleader has in mind to make Guilty" (Wharton 551, original emphasis), and in the anonymous *The Doctrine of Innuendo's Discuss'd* (1731), which argues that using innuendo means "putting forced Constructions upon every Paper, and torturing and wresting the Author's Meaning to support unreasonable Prosecutions" (*The Doctrine of Innuendo's Discuss'd* 15–16).

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occasion misdirection, in order to communicate dissident meaning while also rendering it deniable" – sometimes successfully, sometimes not (Keymer 22).[53]

What all of this means for the *Dunciad*s is that there are at least three passages in the poem that made Pope vulnerable to legal persecution. Firstly, the lines "in vain decry'd and curst, / Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first" can be read as an attack against George I and II, or as questioning the legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession in general (*Dunciad* 1.6). Secondly, the line "His rapid waters in their passage burn" suggests that Edmund Curll has a venereal disease; if this disease is understood to be syphilis, the line is libellous (*Dunciad* 2.184). And lastly, the passage surrounding the line "Behold yon Pair, in strict embraces join'd" implies that the dunces Thomas Burnet and George Duckett have a sexual relationship, hence accusing them of a punishable crime (*Dunciad* 3.179).

Since Pope could no longer firmly rely on the *mitior sensus* principle, he could not simply hope that a court would overlook the possible allusion to the monarchs, assume that he wanted to imply that Curll was suffering from a venereal disease other than syphilis, or that Burnet and Duckett's embrace is merely platonic. Yet, the rather new principle that judges and juries should interpret ironies, ambiguities, gutted names, and allusions 'as all the world understands them' posed the problem for accusers and prosecutors that they had to convincingly argue that the potentially libellous expression had exactly one single generally accepted meaning. The satirist could, hence, bring forward more or less plausible evidence that this was not the case. And by forcing his accusers to spell out the libellous content, he could even make them incriminate themselves.[54]

Self-annotations were one possible way of recording one's enemies' libellous interpretations of one's works and of presenting evidence that the passages in question could, after all, also be interpreted in a completely innocuous way. For instance, Pope uses his notes to argue that "Dunce the second" etc. is only an innocent reference to a line in Dryden's "To my Dear Friend Mr Congreve" (p. 10f. above) and that the description of Burnet and Duckett's relationship

53 For ambiguation as a satirical strategy, also see Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*.

54 See, for example, Pat Roger's comment on this issue: "It might be retorted that contemporaries kept surprisingly quiet about the theme I have discussed [the reference to Lord Mayor Thorold in the *Dunciad*s actually being a satire against George II], if it was indeed forced upon their attention. To this there are two answers. The first is that Pope commits *lèse-majesté* with such finesse that commentators risk a charge of sedition if they tease out the full implications. It is noteworthy that hostile reactions to works such as the *Epistle to Augustus* stop cautiously short of paraphrasing the sharpest anti-court thrusts" (P. Rogers, *Literature and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* 145).

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is merely an allusion to that of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*, which – as the note disingenuously adds – "surely was never interpreted in a perverse sense" (*Dunciad* 3.179n; for a detailed discussion of this note, see chapter 2.2.1.2). In the case of Curll's disease, Pope's annotation both disowns and emphasises the dangerous reading without, however, explicitly naming syphilis (p. 51f. above).

What these notes illustrate is that writing satire in Pope's time was a tightrope act that made authors waver between satiric explicitness and legal safety. By negotiating, denying, or obscuring the meaning of certain passages, self-annotations could potentially help satirists gain the upper hand in this game. Unfortunately, the comments of Pope's legal adviser Nicholas Fazakerly on the 1729 *Dunciad* do not survive (see above p. 72 n above). Hence, we cannot ascertain whether Pope employed the annotations on his three most dangerous passages primarily as legal safeguards or merely as provocatively unconvincing 'innocent' interpretations that would incite the dunces to even more enraged reactions to the *Dunciad*s.[55] Nevertheless, such a strategy would be a stroke of genius: while emphasising the ambiguity to avoid legal action, Pope would, in fact, be stressing the libellous reading.

2.1.3 *The Impact of the* Dunciad*s on Self-Annotation*

The sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad* had been a bestseller (cf. Griffith, "The *Dunciad* of 1728" 6), and, just one year later, many readers bought the very same poem for a price that had increased by more than a sixfold (6s. 6d. in 1729 as opposed to 1s. in 1728) (cf. Griffith 6; Sutherland, "Introduction" xxix).[56] The difference between the cheap 1728 version and the expensive 1729 version was that the latter featured a great number of annotations and several other paratexts. Hence, readers spent a considerable amount of money on an annotated (and otherwise paratextually enriched) edition of a poem that they most likely already owned in its unadorned version. Had they not been intrigued by Pope's annotations (as has sometimes been argued, see p. 56 above), they could simply have contented themselves with the much cheaper 1728 *Dunciad*. But they did not. What is more, the annotations caused considerable commotion among the dunces who quickly began to publish refutations of the accusations

55 If Pope indeed used his annotations as a safety mechanism against legal trouble, he was successful as he was not prosecuted for anything in the *Dunciad*s. His most dangerous encounter with the law was in 1723 over his publication of the openly Jacobitical *The Works of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham* (cf. Keymer 107; Hone, *Alexander Pope in the Making* 176–88).

56 A pirate copy of the 1729 *Dunciad* that sold at 2s. also enjoyed great popularity (cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" xxix).

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that Pope levelled against them in his notes (see, e.g., chapter 2.2.1). This led to a constant back-and-forth between Pope and his enemies, all of which was enshrined in the ever-new editions of the annotated *Dunciad*s that were published between 1729 and 1743. After the publication of the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s in 1742, a review in the *Universal Spectator* (iss. 704, 3 Apr. 1742) even discussed three of its notes in quite some detail (cf. "Of the *New Dunciad*"). Put briefly, the annotations in the *Dunciad*s were widely read and can be seen as one of the work's selling points for Pope's contemporaries. Yet more importantly, they had a profound impact on satiric poetry for the next one hundred years.

Before 1729, self-annotations were – though not uncommon – not too prevalent. And those notes that *were* featured in pre-1729 humorous and satiric literature often were not particularly long and/or numerous (one notable exception is, of course, Saint-Hyacinthe's *Chef d'œvre* discussed above). This changed with the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum* – a change that not only affected British writers but, as illustrated by a few examples below, authors throughout Europe. The enormous impact of the *Dunciad Variorum* is evinced by (1) the significant increase in self-annotated works after 1729, especially (2) the great number of annotated poems with titles ending on *-iad* that were published directly in its wake, (3) annotated works likewise ending in *-iad* that were published well into the second half of the nineteenth century, (4) the convention (still followed around 1800) of attributing some or all of the annotations in a work to Scriblerus (one of the annotator personas in the *Dunciad*s), and (5) the fact that self-annotating Romantic satirists still invoked Pope as their main model.[57]

In 1728, taking into account original English poems that were first published in this year, unannotated poems outnumber self-annotated poems at a ratio of ca. 4:1.[58] In 1729, this ratio is ca. 3:1. In 1744, the year of Pope's death, the ratio of

57 Surprisingly, Laurence Sterne, the principal heir of the Scriblerian spirit, did not append many notes to his otherwise paratextually experimental *Tristram Shandy*. Most of its notes appear in Tristram's 'translation' of Hafen Slawkenbergius's tale. In these instances, the notes ascribed to Tristram create the (very transparent) illusion that both he and Slawkenbergius really exist and that the memoirs as a whole are authentic. Yet, the notes in *Tristram Shandy* are not restricted to this (pseudo)authenticating function. They are sometimes also meant to provide references to other passages in the memoirs, to offer contextual information, to "counterpoint and undermine the narrative voice(s) of the text" (Benstock 205), and, by using fake Latin or Greek quotes, to parody real learned commentaries (cf. Eckstein 130–32). For a recent discussion of Sterne's self-annotations, see H. Williams, *Laurence Sterne and the Eighteenth-Century Book*.

58 For the estimates provided here, I systematically went through scans provided on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (*ECCO*) for the years 1728, 1729, 1744 and 1799

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unannotated to self-annotated English poems that first appeared in this year is already at ca. 4:3. And by 1799, self-annotated poems even slightly outnumber unannotated ones among new publications. As will be shown in what follows, Pope's *Dunciad*s played a considerable role in this development. Here, I will only discuss works that explicitly inscribe themselves into the tradition of the *Dunciad*s; a much more comprehensive collection of self-annotated works in Pope's time (and beyond) can be found in my 'External Appendix' (http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434; for a brief introduction to this collection, see p. 391).

The title and the paratextual apparatus of the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* sparked a literary trend that only died down towards the end of the nineteenth century. Examples of self-annotated poems with titles ending on *-iad* that were published directly in the wake of the *Dunciad Variorum* include the anonymous *Dulcinead Variorum: A Satyrical Poem, in Hudibrastick Verse* (1729), the anonymous *Censoriad* (1730), the anonymous *Martiniad* (1730), the anonymous *Beeriad: or, Progress of Drink* (1736), Henry Fielding's *The Vernoniad* (1741), Paul Whitehead's *Gymnasiad, or Boxing Match* [...] *With the Prolegomena of Scriblerus Tertius, and Notes Variorum* (1744), the pseudonymous *Richardiad* by 'Theodorus Gratian' (1744), and the anonymous *Deviliad* (1744).[59] Other direct reactions to the *Dunciad Variorum* were also copiously annotated, e.g. George Duckett et al.'s *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examin'd; and the Errors of Scriblerus and his Man William Detected* (1729).[60]

Later examples of this trend include William Kenrick's *So Much Talk'd of and Expected Old Woman's Dunciad,* [...] *With Historical, Critical, and*

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respectively. For the years 1728, 1729, and 1744, I looked at all works on *ECCO* that were published in the respective time span and then excluded everything that was not the first edition of a poem written in English. (English translations of poems that were first published in another language were not included in my count.) For all of the works that remained – i.e. all original English poems published during the respective years – I checked the scans to determine how many of the these works had annotations and how many had none. When a poem only had one or two very brief notes, I counted it as unannotated.

In the case of 1799 (due to the much larger number of works published at the end of the century in comparison to the beginning and middle), I only took a look at original English texts that announced in their titles that they were poems (e.g. *XYZ, a Poem*). This seems to be permissible, since most poems at that time declared their genre on their title page.

59 For a more detailed overview of satirical poems ending on *-iad* (both with and without notes) that were inspired by the *Dunciad*s, see Bond, "*-iad*: A Progeny of the *Dunciad*".

60 By contrast, the poems that reacted to the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad* had either no annotations at all (e.g. James Ralph's *Sawney*) or only a few short notes (e.g. the anonymous *Codrus, or, the Dunciad Dissected* and *The Progress of Dullness*). The notes in these works usually identify intertextual references and allusions.

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Explanatory Notes, by Margelina Scribelinda Macularia (1751), Richard Owen Cambridge's *The Scribleriad* (1751), William Kenrick's *The Pasquinade* (1753), Christopher Smart's *Hilliad* (1753), the anonymous *The Nowiad* (1755), Andrew Brice's *Mobiad: or, Battle of the Voice* (1770), William Combe's *Diaboliad* (1777), John Wolcot's *Lousiad* (1785, published under the pseudonym Peter Pindar), the pseudonymous *Fleaiad* by 'Paul Pindar' (1788), Thomas Rodd's *Theriad* (1790), William Gifford's *Baviad* (1791) and *Mæviad* (1795), the anonymous *Hilliad* (1796), Moses Leavitt Neal's *The Presbyteriad* (1797), the anonymous *Druriad* (1798), Edward Goulburn's *Blueviad* (1805), John Wilson Croker's *The Amazoniad* (1806),[61] Richard Mant's *Simpliciad* (1808), the pseudonymous *Scotiad* by 'Macro' (1809), the likewise pseudonymous *Brandiad* by 'Peter Aorist' (1809), Joel Barlow's *Columbiad* (1809), the anonymous *Festivaliad* (1811), George Daniel's *Modern Dunciad* (1814), the anonymous *Craniad* (1817), Hans Busk's *Vestriad* (1820), Charles Burton's *Bardiad* (1823), the anonymous *Puffiad* (1828), Edwin Blood's *Washiad* (1858), Augustus Pierce's *Rebelliad* (1863), and William Leech's *Obliviad* (1879). Self-annotated French successors of the *Dunciad*s include Joseph Méry and Auguste Barthélemy's poems *La Villéliade, ou la Prise du château Rivoli poème héroï-comique en cinq chants* (1826) and *La Bacriade, ou la Guerre d'Alger, poème héroï-comique en cinq chants* (1827).[62]

As some of the titles show, the persona of Scriblerus (the brainchild of Pope and his friends, and a prominent 'annotator' in the *Dunciad*s) was rather popular among later satirical self-annotators. The practice of attributing some or all notes in a work to him or one of his 'descendants' continued throughout the eighteenth century into the Romantic age. Most prominently perhaps, Fielding ascribes the annotations in *The Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731) to 'H. Scriblerus Secundus'; he also signs several of his other dramas with 'Scriblerus Secundus' (cf. Marshall, "Fielding and the Scriblerians" 24).[63] However, the notes that Fielding attributes to Scriblerus appear more good-humoured than Pope's, and they have even been read as a negative reaction against, rather than a continuation of, the works of the old Scriblerus Club

61 Croker was a friend of Byron's publisher John Murray and often advised him on literary matters.

62 The lasting popularity of the *Dunciad*s is also shown by the fact that, in 1823, Byron's friend Thomas Moore recorded that Charles Lamb was "collecting the works of the Dunciad heroes" (T. Moore, *Journal of Thomas Moore* 2: 624).

63 The exact impact of Pope and the other members of the *Scriblerus Club* on Fielding is contested. For a detailed and critical overview of the discussion, see Marshall, "Fielding and the Scriblerians". The *Vernoniad* (1741), a thinly disguised attack against Walpole, is another noteworthy case of self-annotation in Fielding's œuvre. Bertrand Goldgar goes so far as to argue that the poem "seems to exist largely for the sake of the notes, which make most of whatever political points are to be made and which perpetrate the central joke that the poem is a translation (with commentary) of a 'lost' Homeric work" (Goldgar 197).

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(cf. Goldgar 196; Power 757; Weinbrot, "Fielding's *Tragedy of Tragedies*" *passim*; Marshall, "Myth of Scriblerus" 86).

The Tragedy of Tragedies is thus a good example of the independent existence that Scriblerus developed after the publication of the 'genuine' Scriblerian pieces written by Pope and his friends. This development is not surprising given the fact that the Scriblerus persona was extremely elusive and ambiguous from his very first appearance in works like the *Peri Bathous*, the *Dunciad*s, and *The Memoirs of Scriblerus* onwards, where he can be read both as an incompetent idiot and as an ironic, witty satirist (see chapter 2.3). Other works which claim that their annotations (and sometimes even the whole text) were written by Scriblerus or one of his successors include Thomas Cooke's *The Candidates for the Bays. A Poem. Written by Scriblerus Tertius* (1730); Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener's *Von der Vortrefflichkeit der Glückwünschungsschreiben* [*On the Egregiousness of Congratulatory Letters*] (1741), which ascribes the notes to Martin Scribler dem Jüngeren (the Younger); James Love's *Cricket: An Heroic Poem. Illustrated with the Critical Observations of Scriblerus Maximus* (1742?), the pseudonymous Galfridus Scriblerus's *Remarks on Mr. Pope's Epistle of Taste, to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington. By Galfridus Scriblerus, Martini Scriberi F. N. M.* (1751); the anonymous *The Humours of Harrogate* [...] *With Notes Descriptive, Historical, Explanatory, Critical, and Hyper-Critical by Martinus Scriblerus* (1763); Cuthbert Shaw's *The Race.* [...] *With Notes. By Faustinus Scriblerus* (1765); James-Brown Ashton's *The Ode on Dedicating a Building, and Erecting a Statue, to Le Stue, Cook to the Duke of Newcastle at Clermont; With Notes, by Martinus Scriblerus* (1769); Thomas Burgess's *Bagley; a Descriptive Poem. With the Annotations of Scriblerus Secundus* (1777); William Cook's *The Royal Naval Review* [...] *With Notes Critical and Explanatory. By a Descendant of the Great Scriblerus* (1781); the anonymous *Lamentation of a Dog* [...] *With Notes by Scriblerus Secundus* (1796); Eaton Stannard Barrett's *All the Talents* (1807), in which many of the annotations upon annotations are signed by Scriblerus; and the pseudonymous *Little Odes to Great Folks* [...] *With Notes, Critical and Explanatory, By Sextus Scriblerus* (1808), which was authored by a 'Pindar Minimus'.

Self-annotating satirists referred to Pope as their main model throughout the (Pre-)Romantic age. A prime example occurs in Thomas James Mathias's 1789 satire *The Pursuits of Literature*, which is almost forgotten today but which was "one of the biggest commercial successes of the 1790s" (A. Watson, "The Dark Assassin" 37).[64] In his preface to the second dialogue of the poem, Mathias, drawing on Pope, argues that (modern) satire *must* be annotated:

64 Byron was well acquainted with the work and specifically singled out its annotations as praiseworthy. In August 1811, he wrote to James Wedderburn Webster: "My friend Hodgson

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> [T]he work of any Satirist is transient as to it's [sic] immediate subject. But as it is a view of life *designed* to be presented to other times, as well as to those in which it is written, the necessity of an author's furnishing *Notes to his own compositions* is evident, to clear up for himself such difficulties as the lapse of time […] would unavoidably create. This is a privilege and a liberty which was denied to the ancients, which Dryden rejected, and Pope partially adopted. (Mathias 65, original emphasis)

In a footnote[65] to this passage, Mathias also quotes Swift's famous letter to Pope in which he urges him to annotate the *Dunciad*s (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 2: 594).[66]

Apart from *The Pursuits of Literature*, the 1790s also saw two other best-selling satires written in the tradition of the *Dunciad*s – William Gifford's *Baviad* and *Mæviad*. Like the notes in the *Dunciad*s, the annotations in Gifford's two satires differentiate between "Remarks" and "Imitations". The former provide background information on the writers ridiculed in the main text and – as in Mathias's poem – are often more vituperative than the poem itself. Like Pope, Gifford also includes lengthy quotes from his victims' works in order to justify his ridicule of them. In later editions of the successful poems, he – again like Pope – also takes into account the reception of his satire and includes writers who did not appear in the first edition but who, due to their reaction to the work, merited a place in the poem. The 'Imitations' notes quote passages from Persius's satires that are echoed in Gifford's poems.

Gifford would later have a considerable influence on Byron's development as a writer (cf. Beaty 9).[67] He was employed as reader for Byron's publisher John Murray, and Byron had a life-long admiration for the older poet, even going so far as to call him his "*literary* father (*BLJ* 11: 117, original emphasis). Gifford – and, to a lesser extent, Mathias – can definitely be seen as the link

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is not much honoured by the comparison to the 'Pursuits of L' which is notoriously as far as the *poetry* goes the worst written of it's [sic] kind, the World has been long but of one opinion viz. that it's sole merit lies in the Notes, which are indisputably excellent" (*BLJ* 2: 86, original emphasis). In his detailed discussion of the poem, Gary Dyer argues that "[w]hen isolated from the footnotes, his poetry hardly satirizes; it merely lists names with descriptive comments[.] […] For substantive criticism the reader must look further down the page" (Dyer, *British Satire* 26).

65 The footnote is not included in the early editions of *The Pursuits of Literature*, but it appears in the revised fifth edition (1798) from which I am quoting.

66 A review of *The Pursuits of Literature* in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1796, vol. 66, iss. 5) likewise points out the work's debt to Pope: "like its great prototype the Dunciad, [it] is accompanied with *significant* notes" ("Review of *The Pursuits of Literature*" 940, original emphasis).

67 For a recent study of the influence of Gifford and other mid- to late-eighteenth-century satirists on Byron, see Bucknell, "Byron and Satire post-1760" *passim*.

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in the satiric tradition from Pope to Byron, especially with respect to *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and *Hints from Horace* (cf. Jump, "Lord Byron and William Gifford" 323). (For the similarities and differences between Pope's and Byron's self-annotatorial practices, see the 'Interlude' below as well as chapter 4.1.)

From all of these examples, the enormous and long-lasting influence of Pope's *Dunciad*s becomes apparent. His annotations were eagerly read, discussed, imitated, and attacked by contemporaries; they sparked a vogue for self-annotated satirical poems that lasted until the end of the Romantic age (and, in isolated instances, even until the end of the nineteenth century); and they popularised the Scriblerus figure as an annotatorial persona whom different authors used for vastly different purposes. Before the *Dunciad*s, self-annotations on humorous poetry were usually brief and an optional feature. After the *Dunciad*s, they became a nearly indispensable (and often very voluminous) accessory to satirical verse.[68] Pope's impact on the development and popularisation of self-annotation cannot be overestimated. Given his status as one of the most prolific and influential self-annotators of world literature, Pope's practices of authorial annotation deserve much more attention than they have received so far.

2.2 Mimicking Explanatory Notes in the *Dunciad*s

2.2.1 *Delayed Explanation: Stirring up Interest – Reacting to Reception – Reinforcing Satire*

As I have argued in chapter 2.1.1, the annotatorial apparatus that Pope's *Dunciad*s featured from 1729 onwards was unprecedented in its complexity. One feature that makes these notes so intricate is that they are often used to record the work's reception history, thereby making the responses of Pope's enemies a vital part of the satire itself. In this chapter, I will show how Pope strategically elicited reactions from his enemies that he could then use against them in subsequent editions of the *Dunciad*s. In the first part, I will summarise

68 However, this does not mean that *all* satires between 1729 and the end of the Romantic age were annotated. In fact, even a few of the works that directly refer to the *Dunciad*s in their title are unannotated. Examples of such unannotated satires include the anonymous *Causidicade, a Panegyri-Satiri-Serio-Comic-Dramatical Poem* (1743) and Charles Churchill's highly successful *Rosciad* (1761). Many poems inspired by the *Rosciad* were not annotated either, e.g. the anonymous *Rational Rosciad*, (1767), the anonymous *A New Rosciad* (1770), the likewise anonymous *The Edinburgh Rosciad, for 1775* (1775), and James Henry Leigh's *The New Rosciad* (1787).

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the composition and publication history of the *Dunciad*s which reveals Pope's highly methodical approach to garnering responses to his satire. This history shows that Pope's manuscripts contain much more material (especially drafts of annotations and the full names of the dunces) than was eventually included when the first (sparsely annotated) edition of the *Dunciad*s was published in 1728. In other words, Pope deliberately withheld information in 1728 in order to provoke readers (especially the dunces) to fill in the gaps themselves and to create demand for his heavily annotated 1729 *Dunciad*.

Afterwards, I will discuss two fundamentally different strategies of eliciting responses that are employed in the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad*. On the one hand, Pope included 'traps' for the dunces which were carefully designed to provoke a very specific reaction to, or disambiguation of, a given section of the poem (see chapter 2.2.1.2 below). These passages either make false statements about the dunces (thereby inciting them to rectify these statements), or they consist of an ambiguous passage, which, however, strongly hints at a certain insulting or politically dangerous meaning. In other words, Pope designed these traps in such a way that, *if* the dunces reacted to them, they almost had no choice but to react in a specific, foreseeable way. The reactions elicited by these traps can hence be seen as 'guided' interpretations. On the other hand, the 1728 *Dunciad* – especially by omitting or 'gutting' the names of most dunces – also allowed room for relatively free interpretation (see chapter 2.2.1.3 below). Some of its attacks were directed at such widespread shortcomings (e.g. base flattery, political partisanship, or just pure incompetence) that they did not provide any hint as to who might be meant by the blanks and asterisks (e.g. "** his mouth with *Classic* flatt'ry opes"; 1728 *Dunciad* 2.187, original emphasis). In these cases, Pope offered his readers highly ambiguous passages and even lacunae that could be interpreted and filled in in many different ways. In contrast to the first strategy (the use of traps), the interpretation is here far from being guided towards a certain meaning. On the contrary, Pope just put the 'incomplete' poem out there and waited for the dunces to fill in the gaps in ways that he could not possibly have foreseen, let alone evoked. For both of these strategies, I will discuss at least one passage each, tracing its development from the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad* on to the dunces' outraged responses to it and lastly to how Pope's annotations incorporate and mock these responses in later versions of the *Dunciad*s.

2.2.1.1 Composition and Publication History of the Notes in the *Dunciad*s

Both the composition and the publication history of the notes in the *Dunciad*s are rather complex. Though it may appear slightly counterintuitive, my brief

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overview will begin with their *publication*, because this background will later help to unravel their exceedingly intricate (possible) composition history.

The first version of the *Dunciad*s was published in May 1728. It only contains nineteen annotations; later editions of the 1728 *Dunciad* add four further notes. Of these twenty-three annotations in total, one provides an intratextual reference (cf. 1728 *Dunciad* 1.98n); one disingenuously pretends that the line "Still *Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first?*" is an allusion to a passage in Dryden and has no further implications (1.6n, original emphasis); eleven provide information on the (near) contemporaries who are being attacked in the poem (cf. 1.73n; 1.132n; 1.175n; 1.198n; 1.216n; 2.66n; 2.108n; 2.127n; 3.20n; 3.185n; 3.233n); and ten offer further contextual, literary, and historical information not pertaining to the dunces (cf. 1.74n; 1.86n; 1.119n; 1.124n; 2.67n; 2.244n; 3.69n; 3.73n; 3.104n; 3.264n). Notes containing quotes from Pope's literary sources – which would become very prominent from 1729 onwards – are entirely absent. All notes in the 1728 *Dunciad* are rather short in comparison to the ones in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*. Two of the longest annotations are concerned with poet and dunce Elkanah Settle (1.175n; 3.233n), another one with attacking contemporary farces and praising Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (3.185n). The overwhelming majority of the twenty-three notes is retained (with minor variations) in all later versions of the *Dunciad*s.

A further feature of the 1728 *Dunciad* is its 'censoring' of names by only using asterisks instead of letters, by only employing initial letters, or by using 'gutted' names (e.g. "G––n"). Throughout the different editions of the 1728 *Dunciad*, further letters were added to a handful of names, and very few were even spelled out entirely. The majority of names, however, remained incomplete in the 1728 version.

As was usual in Pope's time (see p. 70 above), the publication of the 1728 *Dunciad* soon gave rise to works that promised to identify the persons that were being satirised in it. A pirated edition published in Dublin, for example, filled in many of the names, some of them incorrectly (cf. Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728* 20–21; 156–60).[69] Furthermore, the dubious bookseller

69 To make the publication history of the *Dunciad*s even more complicated, one has to differentiate between two 1728 'Dublin editions': (1) a pirated edition which was most likely really printed in Dublin, and (2) the *non-existent* Dublin edition of which the authorised first edition of the *Dunciad* pretends to be an unauthorised re-print by stating on its title page "DUBLIN, Printed, LONDON Re-printed for A. DODD, 1728" (cf. Vander Meulen, *Pope's Dunciad of 1728* 17; 20). In other words, there is a fictional Dublin edition invented by Pope (who alleges that this is the very first edition of the *Dunciad*s) and an existing Dublin edition in which he had no hand.

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Edmund Curll (one of Pope's greatest enemies) published *A Compleat Key to the Dunciad* in three different editions. As the editions progressed, Curll sometimes changed his initial guesses at the dunces' names, and he became more explicit about the dangerous political and religious overtones of the poem (cf. Vander Meulen 20–22). As shown below, some readers used Curll's *Keys* in order to fill in the dunces' names by hand in their own copies.[70]

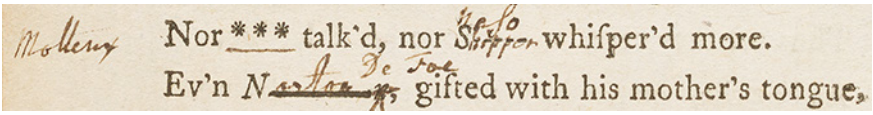


Fig. 1 1728 *Dunciad* with handwritten insertions by a reader

As might be expected, readers still yearned for more reliable information on the dunces. Pope's friend Lord Oxford, for instance, wrote: "I see curl [sic] has advertised a Key to the Dunciad, I have been asked for one by several I wish the True one was come out" (Pope, *Corr.* 2: 496; blank space between "several" and "I" in the original). According to Pope, even George II asked for an authorised key to the poem (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 2: 502). Most famously, on 16 July 1728, Swift wrote to Pope and asked for much more than a key – an extensively annotated edition:

> I have often run over the Dunciad in an Irish edition (I suppose full of faults) which a gentleman sent me. The notes I could wish to be very large, in what relates to the persons concern'd; for I have long observ'd that twenty miles from London no body understands hints, initial letters, or town-facts and passages; and in a few years not even those who live in London. I would have the names of those scriblers printed indexically at the beginning or end of the Poem, with an account of their works, for the reader to refer to. I would have all the Parodies (as they are call'd) referred to the author they imitate[.] [...] I am sure it will be a great disadvantage to the poem, that the persons and facts will not be understood, till an explanation comes out, and a very full one. [...] Again I insist, you must have your Asterisks fill'd up with some real names of real Dunces. I am now reading your preceding letter, of June 28, and find that all I have advis'd above is mention'd there. I would be glad to know whether the quarto edition is to come

70 All three editions of Curll's *Key* were unable to identify the first name in the passage that the owner of this copy was annotating; the *Keys* supplied "Shippen" and "Norton" for the other two names. The owner of this copy adopted these identifications. Later, the owner appears to have used the 1729 *Dunciad* to supply the third name (Motteux) and to correct Curll's "Shippen" to Pope's "Naso" (cf. Pope, 1729 *Dunciad* 2.382–83).

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> out anonymously, as published by the Commentator, with all his pomp of prefaces, &c. and among complaints of spurious editions? – I am thinking whether the Editor should not follow the old style of, This excellent author, &c. and refine in many places when you meant no refinement? and into the bargain take all the load of naming the dunces, their qualities, histories, and performances? (Pope, *Corr.* 2: 504–05)[71]

Swift's (and the public's) pleas were answered: the extensively annotated *Dunciad Variorum* was published in March 1729. Early copies were circulated privately only, but from mid-April 1729 onwards, the work was officially on sale (cf. Foxon 111; Sutherland, "The *Dunciad* of 1729" 348). The notes in this version of the *Dunciad*s are separated into "Remarks" and "Imitations". The "Remarks" provide, among other things, contextual information, sensible as well as absurd interpretations of the poem, 'textual critical' notes, and both faithful and disingenuously altered quotes from the dunces. The "Imitations" quote Pope's literary sources. The *Dunciad Variorum* also sports a wealth of other paratexts, some of them attributed to actual persons, some of them to fictional roles (e.g. 'the publisher'), and some of them to Scriblerus, the alleged editor of the *Dunciad*s. This was the state in which the *Dunciad*s roughly remained until 1742, even though some dunces were substituted for others, and some notes were added, omitted, or revised from edition to edition.[72]

In 1742, the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s was published separately. It was heavily annotated as well: apart from unsigned annotations and notes ascribed to Scriblerus, this edition also features annotations by 'Bentley' (for the real Bentley, see chapter 2.1.1.1, for Pope's fictional version of him, see chapter 2.3). In 1743, the *Dunciad in Four Books* was published, combining the three books

71 In the letter that Swift refers to (from 28 June 1728), Pope explains that the *Dunciad Variorum* "is going to be printed in all pomp […]. It will be attended with *Proeme, Prologomena, Testimonia Scriptorum, Index Authorum*, and Notes *Variorum*. As to the latter, I desire you to read over the Text, and make a few in any way you like best, whether dry raillery, upon the stile and way of commenting of trivial Critics; or humorous, upon the authors in the poem; or historical, of persons, places, times; or explanatory, or collecting the parallel passages of the Ancients" (Pope, *Corr.* 2: 503, original emphasis). Even though Pope asked Swift to supply notes, and even though the "Advertisement" in the 1729 *Dunciad* claims that "[*t*]*he Commentary which attends the Poem, was sent me from several hands*", it is usually assumed that Pope wrote most of the notes himself (1729 *Dunciad* 122, original emphasis; cf. Sutherland, Introduction xxvi).

72 Apart from the six editions published in 1729, the *Dunciad Variorum* was also included in the various editions of Pope's *Works* (in 1735, 1736, and 1742) – each time with minor changes (cf. editor's headnote in 1729 *Dunciad* 117). The 1735c edition was not published in the context of Pope's *Works* but was likewise more or less identical with the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum.*

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of 1728/1729 and the fourth book of 1742. For this version, the poem's old hero Tibbald (Lewis Theobald) was substituted by Bays (Colley Cibber), some notes and paratexts were added or rewritten to account for this change, and various annotations by 'Bentley' were appended to the first three books.[73] The added annotations in this 1743 four-book *Dunciad* are the joint work of Pope and William Warburton, who at this point had become his official co-annotator and who would later prepare the first posthumous edition of Pope's works (for Warburton, also see p. 14 n above).

So far for the publication history of the *Dunciad*s and their annotations. At first sight, one might be induced to think that the notes were only written in response to the public demand for an authorised key to the 1728 *Dunciad*. Yet, the composition history suggests otherwise. This history, however, is exceedingly complicated, and much of it relies on interpretation and, to borrow one of the real-life Bentley's favourite expressions, 'happy conjecture'. First of all, "[t]he origins of the *Dunciad* are shrouded in a mystery worthy of the cloud-compelling queen herself" (McLaverty, "Pope and Giles Jacob's *Lives of the Poets*" 22). By the early 1720s, Pope seems to have drafted a satire on dull poets and their patrons (cf. McLaverty 24; editor's headnote in 1728 *Dunciad* 1); and in October 1725, he wrote to Swift that he had finished a poem on Dulness (cf. McLaverty 23; Pope, *Corr.* 2: 332). However, it is not clear how much of what would later become part of the *Dunciad*s was already present in these drafts.[74]

An evaluation of the composition history of the *Dunciad*s is rendered even more complicated by the fact that none of manuscripts of its different versions are extant today. "Of the manuscripts that lie behind the *New Dunciad* of 1742 and the revised *Dunciad* in four books of 1743, nothing whatever is known" (Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 97). Of the lost manuscripts on which the 1728 and the 1729 *Dunciad*s are partly based, we have at least second-hand knowledge: there seem to have been two manuscripts, commonly called First Broglio and Second Broglio. The First Broglio was most likely written before 1728 (cf. Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728* 48–49). With respect to the Second Broglio, Vander Meulen presents convincing evidence that it was written after

73 For more detailed information on the publication history of the *Dunciad*s, see Foxon 108–31; 146–52; Vander Meulen, "The Printing of Pope's *Dunciad*, 1728"; Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728*; Griffith, "The *Dunciad* of 1728"; Sutherland, "The *Dunciad* of 1729"; P. Rogers, *Pope Encyclopedia* 95–96; as well as the introductions and headnotes in Sutherland's Twickenham edition of the *Dunciad*s and in Rumbold's editions of the 1728 and 1729 *Dunciad*s and the *Dunciad in Four Books*.

74 Pat Rogers, for example, argues that the "*Dunciad* as a real entity, rather than a vaguely sketched promise of things to come, is plainly a creature of 1727, not of 1726 or 1725, let alone 1719" (P. Rogers, *Literature and Popular Culture* 123).

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the First Broglio but likewise *before* the 1728 *Dunciad* was published (cf. Vander Meulen 49–55). Records of these two Broglio manuscripts survive because, at some point in the "mid or late 1730s", Pope gave them to his friend Jonathan Richardson, Jr. (Vander Meulen 48). Richardson compared the First Broglio with a published edition of the 1728 *Dunciad* and the Second Broglio with a later version of the *Dunciad*s published in 1736 (cf. Vander Meulen 48). The 1736 edition is more or less identical with the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*. In his copies of the two *Dunciad* versions, Richardson then noted down the variant readings that could be found in the manuscripts but not in the published editions of the poem. Thus, while the manuscripts themselves are lost, scholars have been able to use Richardson's handwritten notes in his copy of the 1728 *Dunciad* to reconstruct the First Broglio and those in his copy of the 1736 *Dunciad* to reconstruct the Second Broglio.[75]

As far as one can gather from Richardson's notes, the First Broglio contained "fourteen notes, mostly identifying classical parallels. The 1728 edition itself has nineteen, but it uses none of the manuscript ones" (Vander Meulen 56). In other words, even as early as in the First Broglio, Pope toyed with the idea of "Imitations" annotations, which, however, would only be included from the 1729 edition onwards.[76] Richardson's comparison between the Second Broglio and the 1729/1736 *Dunciad Variorum* suggests that the published poem "picks up fewer than half of the approximately three-dozen sources and annotations found" in this Broglio and that "only a tiny fraction of the notes that do occur in the *Variorum* [...] appear in the second manuscript" (Vander Meulen 56). In other words, Pope used *some* of the Second Broglio notes for the *Dunciad Variorum* but also chose not to include many other of the manuscript notes in his published version and printed a great number of notes that cannot be found in the Second Broglio at all. If Vander Meulen's dating of the Second Broglio is correct, the presence of the annotations in this manuscript – even though they are much shorter and less numerous when compared to the published *Dunciad Variorum* – suggests that Pope had planned an extensively annotated

75 The variants noted down by Richardson are reproduced in Mack's *The Last and Greatest Art* and discussed at length in Vander Meulen's *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728*. Richardson's variants show that a rough plan for the fourth book (first published in 1742) had, in fact, existed as early as in 1728 (cf. Mack, *Collected in Himself* 339–43; Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 97–100).

76 Even before the *Dunciad*s, it was common for mock-epic poems to include annotations quoting the original Latin or Greek passages on which they were based (see p. 63 above).

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Dunciad even *before* the publication of the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad*.[77] Vander Meulen's hypothesis about Pope's approach to composing the annotations is entirely plausible. He surmises that in 1728 (and even slightly earlier)

> Pope recorded parallels [i.e. "Imitations"] and composed explanatory annotations unsystematically as he went. Gradually he seems to have recognized the value of providing an extensive list especially of his sources; hence the greater number in the second manuscript than in the first. But once he conceived of the culmination of this strategy in the form of the *Variorum* (planned, as we have seen, by the time of the 1728 publication), he apparently decided to postpone most of the notes for that heavily laden edition, in order to make its contrast with the earlier one all the more striking. Many of his manuscript notations were in the form of what Swift had called 'hints' that could be expanded later. (Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728* 56)

What Richardson's recordings of variants also show is that many (though by no means all) of the dunces' names had been spelled out in the manuscripts or were accompanied by annotations that identified the persons (cf. Vander Meulen 59; Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 99–100).[78] The omitted or incomplete names in the published 1728 *Dunciad* thus represent a strategic, "calculated ambiguity" (Vander Meulen 59). They are designed to raise as many questions as possible about the identity of the dunces and to invite readers to put forward their own guesses of who was being attacked.

The publication of the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad* hence served as a means to create a demand for the already planned 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* (cf. R. W. Rogers 13). Furthermore, it provoked angry (and sometimes just plainly whimsical) responses that could be integrated into the apparatus of the next edition in order to prove that the dunces indeed deserved all the ridicule that Pope showered on them. In many cases, the later *Dunciad*s not only transcribe the dunces' responses (sometimes more, sometimes less faithfully) but directly react to them, e.g. by twisting and ridiculing their comments and by ironically admitting that the dunces had uncovered grave mistakes in the *Dunciad*s that would now be emended. In other words, Pope's satire was a "cultural event that generated controversy, and then used that controversy to fuel its major and minor transformations" (McTague 184).

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77 For a contrary argument, i.e. that Pope only began to draft the notes after having published the 1728 *Dunciad*, see Shef Rogers, "Pope, Publishing, and Popular Interpretations of the *Dunciad Variorum*" 280–82.

78 This does, of course, not mean that the names were cast in stone. Quite on the contrary, Pope sometimes substituted one dunce for another – most famously in his 1743 change of the poem's protagonist but also on a lesser scale, e.g. by having Smedley take Eusden's place in 1729 (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 2.279n).

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2.2.1.2 A Trap for the Dunces

With the exception of those cases in which Pope simply made unequivocally false statements about his enemies in order to provoke them to publish pedantic and self-incriminating corrections,[79] his 'traps for the dunces' usually rely on ambiguity. The passages in question are phrased in such a way as to hint at an extremely insulting or politically dangerous meaning while still leaving open the possibility of an innocent interpretation. This textual strategy can, for instance, be observed in the following carefully crafted passage of the 1728 *Dunciad* and in the responses and counter-responses it elicited. The lines describe the close personal relationship between two hack-authors who received high posts by writing government propaganda:

> Behold yon pair, in strict embraces join'd;
> How like their manners, and how like their mind!
> Fam'd for good nature, *B*– and for truth,
> *D*– for pious passion to the youth.
> Equal in wit, and equally polite,
> Shall this a *Pasquin*, that a *Grumbler* write;
> Like are their merits, like rewards they share,
> That shines a Consul, this Commissioner.
> (1728 *Dunciad* 3.135–42, original emphasis)[80]

The Ambiguity of Pope's Source

This passage raises the question whether the two dunces are only close friends or perhaps actually in romantic and sexual relationship: it claims that they are a "pair",[81] that they are linked in "strict embraces" ("strict" can here either be read as 'pressed tightly together' or as 'pure/moral'),[82] and that one of them is famous for his "passion" for the other. The question is further emphasised (though not answered) by a rather overt intertextual allusion. The lines "Fam'd for good nature, *B*– and for truth, / *D*– for pious passion to the youth" refer to a passage in the fifth book of the *Aeneid* which introduces the characters Nisus and Euryalus – two young soldiers who are part of the Trojan group of survivors

79 For examples of such cases, see p. 98 below.

80 The reference to these two writers is included in both the First and the Second Broglio (cf. Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 124; 151). In both Broglios, the two dunces' last names are spelled out. The Second Broglio also provides a brief note on them: "One of them was made *Consul* at Lisbon, ye other *Commissioner* of Trade in ye Reign of K. George 1st" (Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 151, original emphasis).

81 The *OED* quotes examples of the use of "pair" for a "married couple" or for "[t]wo persons united by marriage, betrothal, or a comparable bond of love, attraction" from ca. 1400 onwards (*OED* "pair, *n.1.*", def. I.4. and I.4.a.).

82 See *OED* "strict, *adj.*" def. I.1.a. and def. II.15.a.

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that accompany Aeneas on his journey to Italy. The passage in the *Aeneid* explains that Euryalus is famous for his "forma insignis viridique iuventa", i.e. his "beauty and flower of youth", while Nisus is known for his "amore pio pueri", i.e. his "tender love for the boy" (Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.295–96, transl. Fairclough).[83] The exact nature of this "tender love", however, remains unclear throughout the *Aeneid* – a fact that Pope uses for his own purposes.

Thus, apart from relying on the ambiguous phrasing of his own text, Pope's trap for the dunces in this passage depends on three aspects: (1) the ambiguous depiction of Nisus and Euryalus's relationship in the *Aeneid*, (2) the fact that most scholars throughout the centuries tended to disambiguate this passage in the *Aeneid* and claimed that it referred to friendship alone, and (3) readers' knowledge that the other, more romantic and sexual, meaning is nevertheless just as possible both in the case of the *Aeneid* and in the case of the 1728 *Dunciad*. Thus, as in his reference to the "ivory gate" in the *Aeneid* (which I will discuss on p. 185ff.), Pope here strategically makes use of the ambiguity and the disambiguation history of his source passage.

The ambiguous depiction of Nisus and Euryalus's relationship in the *Aeneid* as either sexual or non-sexual is discussed by, for instance, the commentator Servius, living around 400 AD. He reads "amore pio" as a reference to chaste love (cf. Servius 1: 619; Fratantuono, "'Pius Amor'" 44). However, he also notes that, during the footrace in which Nisus trips another runner so that Euryalus can win the race, Nisus is described as "non […] oblitus amorum", i.e. not forgetful of his/their loves (Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.334, transl. Fairclough). Servius argues that Virgil's use of "amor" in its plural form in this passage suggests that this love is characterised by "turpitudo", i.e. shamefulness (cf. Servius 1: 621; Fratantuono, "'Pius Amor'" 44).

During the Renaissance, commentators often tried to explain away the homoerotic overtones of Nisus and Euryalus's relationship; it was, in fact, usually extolled as a model of friendship (cf. Wilson-Okamura 111).[84] Likewise, around 1700, the passages about these two characters were frequently praised for their depiction of loyalty and devotion among friends. They even were a popular choice for separately published translations. For instance, Dryden published his translation of the episodes featuring Nisus and Euryalus in 1685 – more

83 It should be noted that the Loeb edition's translation of "pius" as "tender", of course, cannot grasp the complexity of the term *pius* or of the notion of *pietas*. *Pietas* is *the* central concept in the *Aeneid*, and both its contemporary associations for Roman readers and its reception history are extremely intricate. For studies on the concept of *pietas*, see, for example, McLeish; Garrison; and Natali.

84 For a very detailed overview of interpretations of the Nisus/Euryalus passages in the *Aeneid*, see Fratantuono, "'Pius Amor'" *passim*.

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than a decade before printing his entire *Aeneid* translation. Furthermore, the two characters are, for example, praised by Pope's contemporary Charles de Saint-Évremond.[85] Scholars sometimes even went so far as to argue that Nisus and Euryalus are proof that Virgil was not at all preoccupied with homoerotic themes: Knightly Chetwood, in "The Life of Pub. Virgilius Maro" (included in Dryden's *The Works of Virgil in English*), attacks contemporary speculations that Virgil might have been homosexual and names the expression "Nisus amore pio pueri" as evidence that Virgil was exclusively concerned with chaste friendship between men (cf. Dryden, *Works* 5: 31–33). All of these examples show that writers in Pope's time could very well refer to Nisus and Euryalus without readers immediately interpreting this as an allusion to homosexuality.

Nevertheless, an example from William Warburton's 1738 *Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* shows that Pope's contemporaries were indeed aware of the homoerotic connotations of these two characters.[86] Warburton is quite forthright about the romantic nature of Nisus and Euryalus's relationship and connects it to Greek pederasty. He argues that their relationship is "a representation of one of the most famous and singular of the Grecian Institutions" and compares them to the Sacred Band of Thebes, an elite army of male couples (Warburton 1: 243; see also 1: 244). However, he nonetheless insists that their relationship is non-physical, arguing that "this episode [of Nisus and Euryalus] is given for a picture of this Institution in it's [sic] purity" (Warburton 1: 244). Even though Warburton emphasises the non-sexual nature of Nisus and Euryalus's love, his comment shows that he – and, one may suspect, most other authors and readers in Pope's time – was well aware of the fact that Virgil's text could be interpreted as dealing with same-sex attraction. The response that Pope's passage in the 1728 *Dunciad* received is further proof of this.

The Dunces' Reaction in 1728

In all three editions of his *Compleat Key to the Dunciad*, Edmund Curll identifies the two men satirised by Pope in this passage by name: Thomas Burnet and George Duckett. He also provides a bit of background information on them and claims that Burnet published several works under his own name despite them having been written by Duckett (cf. Curll, *Key 1st ed.* 16–17). Even though

85 In a passage discussing why Homer is a greater author than Virgil, Saint-Évremond argues that, "in Virgil, who is not tired with the good Aeneas, and his dear Achates? If you except Nisus and Euryalus, (who, indeed, interest you in all their adventures) you must of necessity languish in the company of all the rest" (Saint-Évremond 2: 153).

86 Readers with a classical education would, of course, also have known Virgil's second Eclogue, in which the shepherd Corydon is – quite unambiguously – lamenting his unrequited love for another man.

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the passage in the 1728 *Dunciad* itself provides sufficient information to allow at least some readers to identify the two dunces, Curll here kindly spells out the reference for everyone.

John Dennis, who was likewise ridiculed in the 1728 *Dunciad*, went several steps further. He dedicated his *Remarks on Mr. Pope's Rape of the Lock* to George Duckett and took it on himself to clarify Pope's (allegedly) scandalous meaning in the passage on Duckett and Burnet. Dennis is especially outraged by the line "*D*– for pious passion to the youth" and explains that it induced him to choose Duckett as his dedicatee: None of the other victims of the 1728 *Dunciad* were

> so flagrantly injur'd as Yourself, the infamous Aspersion was so open and so manifest, that there remained not the least Doubt who was the Person meant by it. [Pope made] [a]n Insinuation equally base and groundless [...]. This base Insinuation was not only contrary to Truth and Justice, but even contrary to common Fame; for You are known to have that Respect, Esteem, and Affection for the most beautiful Part of the Creation, which God and Nature design'd you should have: But You have Qualities to recommend You to them, which have not been given to all, as Truth, Faith, Honour, Justice, and a Conversation, at the same time, entertaining and instructing: These are Qualities which have recommended You to a very fine Lady, to whom You have been married many Years, and by whom You have had Eight Children[.] (Dennis, *Remarks on Rape of the Lock* n.pag.)

The homoerotic overtones that were left implicit and ambiguous in the 1728 *Dunciad* are now made explicit and unequivocal by Dennis. He fell into the snare that had been carefully laid by Pope. Duckett and Burnet themselves apparently never publicly commented on this specific passage.[87]

The 1729 Dunciad Variorum*: Laying the Blame on Dennis*

In the *Dunciad*s editions between 1729 and 1742, Pope appends three annotations to the lines on Duckett and Burnet. One provides readers with the lines on Nisus and Euryalus quoted above ("Euryalus forma insignis ..."), thus unambiguously identifying Pope's literary source (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.173n). Another annotation offers background information on Duckett and Burnet and justifies why Pope included them in the *Dunciad*s. The note explains that they attacked Pope, the Duke of Buckingham, and Francis Atterbury in the *Grumbler* and the *Pasquin* and that they tried to bully Pope into leaving off his work of translating

87 After the publication of the 1729 *Dunciad*, however, they joined forces with Dennis to publish *Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examin'd*.

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the *Iliad* (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.175–76n; Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher* 87).[88] In the third annotation, then, Pope ironically expresses bewilderment at Dennis's reading of the passage and pretends to correct his enemy's misinterpretation:

> The verse is a literal translation of *Virgil, Nisus amore pio pueri* – and here, as in the original, apply'd to Friendship: That between *Nisus* and *Euryalus* is allow'd to make one of the most amiable Episodes in the world, and surely was never interpreted in a perverse sense: But it will astonish the Reader to hear, that on no other occasion than this line, a Dedication was written to this Gentleman to induce him to think something farther. 'Sir, you are known to have all that affection for the beautiful part of the creation which God and Nature design'd. – Sir, you have a very fine Lady – and, Sir, you have eight very fine Children,' – *etc.* [*Dedic. to* Dennis *Rem. on the Rape of the Lock.*] The truth is, the poor Dedicator's brain was turn'd upon this article; he had taken into his head that ever since some *Books* were written against the *Stage*, and since the *Italian Opera* had prevail'd, the nation was infected with a vice not fit to be nam'd. He went so far as to print upon this subject, and concludes his argument with this remark, 'that he cannot help thinking the Obscenity of Plays excusable at this juncture, since, when that execrable sin is spread so wide, it may be of use to the reducing mens minds to the natural desire of women.' DENNIS, *Stage defended* against Mr. *Law*, p.20. Our author has solemnly declared to me, he never heard any creature but the Dedicator mention that Vice and this Gentleman together. (1729 *Dunciad* 3.176n, original emphasis, insertion in brackets by Pope)

What makes Pope's annotation so witty is that his 'correction' of Dennis's alleged misreading is, in fact, quite plausible. As shown above, most critics indeed glossed over the homoerotic elements in Virgil's description of Nisus and Euryalus's relationship; some even explicitly addressed these elements and insisted that they only refer to a close but chaste friendship. The irony of the note thus relies on readers' awareness that there is a discrepancy between what many people *knew* (or at least guessed) about these passages in Virgil and what critics generally *said* about them. Pope pits against each other private understanding and publicly agreed-on interpretation, actual ambiguity and morally motivated disambiguation.

The annotation shows Pope triumphing over his enemy Dennis and facetiously asserting his own intellectual superiority. On the surface level, the note portrays Dennis as an inept critic, who, for whichever reason, is so obsessed with homosexuality that he cannot but read it into the most unambiguously innocent passages. Readers, of course, knew that Dennis's interpretation of the passage was perfectly plausible given its context in the *Dunciad*s itself and

88 Despite providing background information on Duckett and Burnet, Pope does not print their full names (neither in the note nor in the poem) until the 1729f edition (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.175–76var).

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the homoerotic elements in its source.[89] The very fact that the *Dunciad*s are a personal (and often very insulting) satire raises certain expectations: when confronted with an assertion about two dunces that can either be interpreted as neutral and even commendatory or as offensive, readers – drawing on their knowledge of genre conventions – would most likely understand it in the latter way. While this means that the annotation can hardly serve as a serious protestation of innocence on Pope's side,[90] it nevertheless emphasises his victory over Dennis. The trap in the 1728 *Dunciad* was obvious enough, yet Dennis let himself be provoked to such a degree that he could not help but fall into it; he is "damning [himself] out of his own mouth" (A. L. Williams 72; cf. Hess 65). The critic is now turned into Pope's unwilling accomplice, and his well-intended defence of Duckett and Burnet adds to their embarrassment. The more dangerous meaning of the lines on them was quite clear as early as in the 1728 *Dunciad*, but Dennis's involuntary 'contribution' to the 1729 *Dunciad* makes sure that readers linger on the passage and its indelicate implications.

In 1728, Pope had probably hoped that Duckett or Burnet themselves would publicly protest against the passage, but Dennis's reaction proved an even greater opportunity for Pope to display his satiric powers. It allowed him to broaden his attack to include a dunce who is not at all mentioned in the annotated passage and to ridicule Dennis's absurd line of argument in *The Stage Defended*, where he claims that obscene plays are a necessary evil because at least they make men lust after women instead of other men.[91] Furthermore,

89 Williams argues that this annotation on Dennis is one of the prime examples of Pope's method of making "the dunces seem to deny something that has not even been charged and thus raise the question of a guilt in themselves or their friends which the poet, presumably, has not even been aware of" (A. L. Williams 71). However, the note mainly seems to ridicule Dennis for having fallen for this rather obvious trap rather than use his outraged response to raise any serious questions whether Duckett and Burnet might not, after all, have a sexual relationship.

90 From a judicial point of view, Pope's emphasis on the innocent meanings of both his own and Virgil's passages might nevertheless have served as a way of avoiding legal repercussions. In Pope's age, it was libellous to accuse someone of a crime that was punishable in the common law courts, with homosexual acts falling under this law (cf. Holdsworth 8: 348). Thus, Duckett and Burnet could, theoretically, have sued Pope for libel. For more on literature and legal prosecution (and possible ways of evading the law) in Pope's age, see chapter 2.1.2.

91 In his note, Pope faithfully summarises the argument brought forward in this section of Dennis's *The Stage Defended*. Dennis claims that the only reasonable charge against the theatre is that it "excites in Men a Desire to the unlawful Enjoyment of Women" and that it "inclines them to that violent Passion of Love, which is sometimes between the two Sexes" (Dennis, *Stage Defended* 19). However, he asserts that even passages that excite such feelings are excusable because, at the moment, "the execrable Sin of Sodomy is

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the assertion that "the poor Dedicator's brain" was completely focussed on this passage in the *Dunciad*s and on the alleged contemporary prevalence of sodomy portrays Dennis as an unhinged monomaniac. This chimes in with Pope's depictions of Dennis as a madman elsewhere, e.g. in the 1729 *Dunciad* 1.104n and, most prominently, in his 1713 *The Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, Concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of Mr. John Denn--*.[92]

Pope's use of Dennis's dedication to Duckett is not the only example of a dunce who fell into one of Pope's carefully laid out traps when reacting to the 1728 *Dunciad*, and whose blunder would then be ridiculed in the 1729 version. We get, for instance, James Ralph, who (deliberately?) misread "the Man" and "the first" in the opening lines "Books and the Man I sing, the first who brings / The Smithfield Muses to the Ear of Kings" as a reference to Pope rather than Tibbald, the main dunce.[93] In this reading, Pope would call himself a disreputable hack poet – Smithfield being "the place where Bartholomew Fair was kept, whose shews, machines, and dramatical entertainments [were] formerly agreeable only to the taste of the Rabble" before high society began to enjoy such (in Pope's view) vulgar artistic displays (*Dunciad* 1.2n). In a note on the 1729 *Dunciad*, Scriblerus ridicules Ralph for his blunder and his alleged ignorance of epic conventions, which dictate that the first few lines of an epic poem describe the main actions of the hero, not of the author (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 1.1–2n). However, Scriblerus conveniently overlooks the fact that there was also an epic convention of authors boasting at the very beginning of their poem that they are the first to write about a certain topic or in a certain manner. The most prominent example, perhaps, is Milton's claim that his *Paradise Lost* "pursues /

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spread so wide, that the aforesaid Passages might be of some Use to reducing Mens [sic] Minds to the natural Desire of Women" (Dennis, *Stage Defended* 20).

92 In the 1743 *Dunciad*, the passage and annotation are slightly altered. The passage in the poem is shortened; the dunces' names and the intertextual reference to the *Aeneid* are omitted. The two explanatory notes (one about the dunces' offenses against Pope, one about Dennis's reaction) are combined into one. The part that provides background information on the dunces is shortened, but Pope still retains the entire note on Dennis, introducing it as follows: "After many Editions of this poem, the Author thought fit to omit the names of these two persons, whose injury to him was of so old a date. In the verses he omitted, it was said that one of them had a *pious passion* for the other. It was a literal translation of *Virgil, Nisus amore pio pueri* – and there, as in the original, applied to Friendship" (*Dunciad* 3.179n, original emphasis). The rest of the note is more or less identical with the 1729 version. It seems that Pope simply could not bring himself to omit the record of his witty triumph over Dennis.

93 In *Sawney*, Ralph writes: "Both the Modesty and Politeness of the *Authors*, appear in these two first Lines of their admirable Poem, with the utmost [sic] Plainness and Self-conviction; their Modesty, in boasting *Kings* were to be their Readers; their Politeness, in entertaining them with *Smithfield-Muses*" (Ralph v, original emphasis).

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Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.15–16). Hence, Ralph's argument that Pope is writing about himself when mentioning "the first who brings" is not implausible. Furthermore, the ellipsis and resulting ambiguous syntax in the first two lines of the 1728 *Dunciad* indeed warrant Ralph's interpretation ("the Man I sing, [who ***am***] the first who brings" vs. "the Man I sing, [who ***is***] the first who brings"). The syntactic ambiguity may have been an oversight on Pope's side, but it may just as well have been a strategic ruse to evoke exactly the reading that Ralph put forward.

In another case, Pope makes the dead Elkanah Settle prophesise that "** and ** shall taste" Tibbald's theatrical dragons when Dulness is "rais'd from Booths to Theatre, to Court" (1728 *Dunciad* 3.251; 3.253). The reference to the court and the metre (which suggests that one censored word is monosyllabic, the other trisyllabic) strongly imply that the asterisks stand for George and Caroline, i.e. the king and queen.[94] Matthew Concanen pointed this out and challenged Pope to fill in the blanks, who retorted by inserting "Peers and Magistrates" and ridiculing Concanen for his accusation (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.299n; Concanen vi).

In other instances, Pope simply (and unambiguously) published lies or half-truths that the dunces could then pedantically correct (which often resulted in self-incrimination). This goes, for example, for the passage in which Pope (after getting the date right in both Broglios) incorrectly claims that Curll stood in the pillory in March, allowing Curll to protest that this actually happened in February (cf. *Dunciad* 2.3n; Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 106; 138).[95] Pope gladly included this vital correction in later editions of his satire. A similar case is Pope's assertion that Edward Ward sold *ale* in his pub, which provoked an angry retort by Ward and led to a series of annotations in which Pope heavily tampered with Ward's statements before printing them (cf. *Dunciad* 1.233n; also see p. 110 n below).[96]

What unites all of these examples is that the dunces' responses are guided and calculated by Pope. He appears to have known exactly which reaction he could expect and only had to hope *that* someone would react. Except for those cases that simply contain lies about the dunces, these traps rely on passages that strongly suggest one interpretation but that are still ambiguous enough so that Pope could later claim that he actually intended a quite different (and innocent) meaning. One might say that these are cases of *feigned*

94 In the Second Broglio, Pope had experimented with "Universities and Lords" and "Peers and Potentates" to fill in the blanks (cf. Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 155).

95 For a similar example (also involving Curll), see p. 373 below.

96 For further examples, see the Errata Section included in the 1729f *Dunciad* (most material from this section was later integrated into the footnote apparatus on the poem).

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disambiguation: in his annotations, Pope claims that these passages can only be read in one (innocuous) way, but the more dangerous meaning is still clear to anyone. He is using ambiguity strategically but pretends to be oblivious of it.

2.2.1.3 Just Putting It Out There

In contrast to the first strategy, Pope's second strategy of garnering and using the dunces' responses involves much more unpredictability. The first strategy relies on the dunces reacting in a certain foreseen way; the second allows them free reign. This strategy enabled Pope to elicit responses that were so whimsical and outlandish or that required such a degree of familiarity with Grub Street minutiae that he could not have predicted, let alone provoked, them. Pope's use of blanks and 'censored' names in 1728 also allowed for coincidental discoveries of new dunces, either because people yet unknown to Pope became convinced that he must be attacking them, or because unauthorised keys like Curll's drew his attention to further possible victims who had hitherto preferred to hide themselves behind pseudonymity or anonymity. As in the Duckett-Burnet-Dennis example discussed above, Pope hence managed to pit the dunces against themselves or each other. In the example that I will discuss here, Pope succeeds in making Curll reveal the existence of a dunce most likely yet unknown to Pope even though this writer had (pseudonymously) attacked him as early as in 1720. In order to follow this game of hide-and-seek between Pope, Curll, and the newly discovered dunce William Bond, I will trace the steps from Bond's first (pseudonymous) 'interaction' with Pope in 1720 to Curll's unambiguous identification of Bond and his works in 1729.

Bond Before the Publication of the 1728 Dunciad

In 1720, William Bond (using the pseudonym H. Stanhope) published a poem called "The Parallel" in *Mr. Campbell's Packet* (cf. Griffith, "The *Dunciad* Duodecimo" 585). This poem attacks Pope's *Rape of the Lock* and *Windsor Forest*. There is next to no evidence that Pope was aware of this attack.[97]

97 However, Julian Ferraro suggests that Pope may have alluded to Stanhope in a manuscript draft of "Sandys's Ghost" (cf. Ferraro 172). In the draft, Pope uses the gutted name "St---pe" but later refers to this man's 'uncle' James Stanhope. It is not known when exactly "Sandys's Ghost" was written, but it definitely predates the *Dunciad*s (guesses range from ca. 1717 to 1723) (cf. Ferraro 171–72). If the reference in this poem is indeed to H. Stanhope, it would suggest that Pope had been aware of "The Parallel" several years prior to the 1728 *Dunciad*. Given that "Sandy's Ghost" makes no reference to Bond, this would also indicate that Pope at this time believed Stanhope to be a real person and did not know of Bond's existence. (For the possibility that Stanhope might, after all, have been an actual writer, see p. 103 n below.)

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Not much about Bond's life is known. He seems to have been deeply involved in Grub Street business and was "one of Curll's oldest hands" (Baines and P. Rogers 207). He was the "editor and chief author of a spurious continuation of Steele and Addison's *Spectator*" and, together with Aaron Hill (yet another dunce), co-authored the *Plain Dealer* in 1724 and 1725 (Sambrook 522). The greatest majority of his literary and journalistic works were published anonymously or pseudonymously (cf. Sambrook 522–23).

In the Broglio manuscripts of the *Dunciad*s, Bond is not mentioned (probably because Pope really did not know of his existence yet). In manuscript drafts of the passage in which Curll would later 'detect' a reference to Bond, Pope wavered between the names "Banks" and "Barber" in the First Broglio and decided for "Banks" in the Second Broglio (cf. Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 103; 136).

The 1728 Dunciad*: Allowing Free Play*

In the 1728 *Dunciad*, two passages are of interest to a discussion of Pope's subsequent 'discovery' and treatment of his detractor William Bond. The first is the line into which Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* would later insert Bond's name: "Safe, where no criticks damn, no duns molest, / Where *G-n, B-*, and high-born *H-* rest!" (1728 *Dunciad* 1.239–40, original emphasis). The second passage is the one to which, in 1729, Pope would append his annotation on Bond and refer to Curll's identification of him. It describes how, during the games of the dunces, "*Mears, Warner, Wilkins* run: Delusive thought! / **, **, and **, the wretches caught" (1728a-d *Dunciad* 2.105–06, original emphasis). In the 1728e edition, the second line at least supplies initial letters: "*B– B– B–*, the Varlets caught" (1728e *Dunciad* 2.106, original emphasis).

Both quotes show that there is nothing in these passages that allowed readers to identify Pope's victims with certainty. Readers' interpretation is only restrained by the metre and the initial letters.[98] The two passages hence are borderline cases between strategic ambiguity and complete openness. Pope's readers thus had relatively free reign to make of these incomplete passages whatever they wanted. They did not disappoint.

98 Another restriction is, of course, language itself. More specifically, there is only a certain number of monosyllables starting with *B* that would be recognised as a word or name in the first place; 'Bond' is among them, 'Brlüp', for example, is not.

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1728: Publication of Curll's Key to the Dunciad *and of* The Progress of Dulness

In all three editions of his *Key*, when commenting on the first passage above, Curll inserts the name of Bond and explains (with minor variations between the editions) that "Mr. *Bond* wrote a just Satire gainst [sic] Mr. *Pope*, and is still living" (Curll, *Key 3rd ed.* 10, original emphasis). He does not attempt to fill in the blanks in the second passage quoted above.

Furthermore, in response to the publication of the 1728 *Dunciad*, Curll and a few of Pope's other enemies teamed up and published a collection of writings against him, titled *The Progress of Dulness* (cf. Griffith, "The *Dunciad* Duodecimo" 585; Sambrook 523). The first piece in this collection is William Bond's "The Parallel" – now rechristened "The Progress of Dulness". As in 1720, it is pseudonymously signed "H. Stanhope". Apart from reissuing his old satire (or at least allowing Curll to reissue it), Bond did not publicly comment on Pope's alleged inclusion of him in the 1728 *Dunciad* elsewhere.

Even though Pope now had learnt that there was a Mr. Bond who had written a satire against him, Bond's obscurity and aversion against publishing under his own name meant that Pope most likely still knew neither the identity of this man nor the title of his satire. In the 1729 *Dunciad*, Pope would use his ignorance to his own benefit.

The 1729 Dunciad Variorum*: Getting Back at Curll and Bond*

In the *Dunciad Variorum*, Pope ridicules Bond's obscurity and alludes to this very obscurity to make a point about Curll's questionable business practices. As in the example discussed above, in which Pope does not simply reprint Dennis's reaction but cleverly uses it against his enemies, Pope here turns Curll against Curll himself and his hack writers.

The first passage quoted above, into which Curll inserted Bond's name, is now disambiguated quite differently by Pope: "Safe, where no criticks damn, no duns molest, / Where Gildon, Banks, and high-born Howard rest" (1729 *Dunciad* 1.249–50). By including "Banks" instead of "Bond", thereby refusing to follow Curll's suggestion, Pope raises questions about the accuracy of Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* and affirms his own power over the dunces and his poem.[99]

The information on Bond that is provided in the *Key to the Dunciad* is appended to a very different section of the poem – one that suits Bond perfectly, given his predilection for anonymous and pseudonymous publication. Curll's revelation thus indeed finds a place in Pope's work but only on

99 For a discussion of the power that Pope exerts over the dunces' responses to his poem, also see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 86–87.

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the satirist's own terms. The passage in question is part of the games of the dunces in the second book. Dulness disguises three unknown hack writers as Congreve, Addison, and Prior, and challenges a group of shady booksellers to catch them: "Mears, Warner, Wilkins run: Delusive thought! / Breval, Besaleel, Bond, the Varlets caught" (1729 *Dunciad* 2.117–18). In the first of two annotations on this passage, Pope summarises the information that Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* provides about John Breval, Bezaleel Morrice, and William Bond (cf. 2.116n). By solely relying on Curll here, Pope distances himself "from any personal contact with the dunces" (Baines and P. Rogers 189). Furthermore, he insinuates that the only person who knowns anything about these three writers is the most scandalous bookseller of the age – they are completely unfamiliar to the rest of the world. The second annotation on these lines, which is signed by the editor persona Scriblerus, even goes a step further:

> I foresee it will be objected from this line, that we were in an error in our assertion on ver. 46. of this book, that *More* was a fictitious name, since these persons are equally represented by the Poet as phantoms. So at first sight it may seem; but be not deceived, Reader; these also are not real persons. 'Tis true, *Curl* declares *Breval*, a Captain, author of a Libel call'd *The Confederates*; but the same *Curl* first said it was written by *Joseph Gay*: Is his second assertion to be credited any more than his first? He likewise affirms *Bond* to be one who writ a Satire on our Poet; but where is such a Satire to be found? where was such a Writer ever heard of? […] Thou may'st depend upon it, no such authors ever lived: All phantoms! SCRIBLERUS. (1729 *Dunciad* 2.118n, original emphasis)[100]

In his annotation on line 2.46 in the 1729 *Dunciad*, Scriblerus asserted that the mention of "More" in the poem does not refer to the plagiarist James Moore Smythe (as an unsigned note for the same line explains) but that it is an entirely fictional name alluding to the Greek word *μωρία* [*moria*], i.e. stupidity. Now, instead of conceding that he might have been wrong in this earlier annotation, Scriblerus (seriously or ironically)[101] claims that Breval, Bond, and Morrice are likewise fictitious characters. Their existence may be affirmed in the *Key to the Dunciad*, but who would be naive enough to believe anything Curll says? As the annotation points out, there are plenty of reasons to mistrust Curll, among them his hacks' penchant for anonymous and pseudonymous publication, and

100 From 1729 onwards, the index for the *Dunciad*s also features the entry "BOND, BESALEEL, BREVAL, not living Writers, but Phantoms" (1729 *Dunciad* 360; *Dunciad* 402).

101 For the fact that it is often ambiguous whether Scriblerus should be imagined as Pope's intelligent and ironic mouthpiece or as the serious and stupid butt of the author's jokes, see chapter 2.3.1.

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especially his practice of putting names that resemble those of famous authors on the title pages of obscure writers' works.[102]

Pope's ironic questions regarding Bond – "where is such a Satire to be found? where was such a Writer ever heard of?" – evince his (apparently genuine)[103] unfamiliarity with this author but also reinforce the insult against the dunce and draw attention to Bond's habit of clandestine publication.[104] Instead of straightforwardly (and rather long-windedly) commenting on this issue, Pope chose a more elegant way: as in the annotation on Dennis discussed in the previous subchapter, Pope pretends to disambiguate the passage in one way (Bond does not exist), thereby ironically disambiguating it in another way (Bond is indeed a real person, but he is so obscure that one is justified in denying his existence).

The facetious denial of Breval, Bond, and Morrice's existence makes a point about the frequently ambiguous status of eighteenth-century authorship. Publishing anonymously or under a fictional pseudonym, ascribing one's own works to another real person or claiming another's works for oneself, inventing or concealing co-authors, appropriating another writer's pseudonym – all of

102 Breval's 1717 *The Confederates* (a response to the Scriblerian *Three Hours after Marriage*), for instance, claims to be the work of a "Mr. Gay", strongly insinuating that this author is Pope's friend John Gay. Only the signature at the end of its dedication makes clear that it is actually ascribed to the (fictional) Joseph Gay. Though the work was published by Rebecca Burleigh (another dubious bookseller associated with Curll), it was advertised by Curll himself (cf. Baines and P. Rogers 101). Pope's annotation also contains a jibe at Giles Jacob, who, in his 1723 *Poetical Register*, asserted that Joseph Gay was a real person (cf. G. Jacob, *Poetical Register* 2: 289).

103 In the "Testimonies of Authors", which are prefixed to the *Dunciad Variorum*, Pope refers to Bond's pseudonym H. Stanhope, probably still believing that Stanhope is a real person (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 159). Even after Curll's explanation that Stanhope was, in fact, Bond, Pope did not change the passage in later editions (cf. *Dunciad* 63). Baines and Rogers point out that it is conceivable that a writer named Stanhope might have existed after all: "[S]ince one of the other Stanhope-Curll poems is *Verses Sacred to the Memory of the Right Honourable James Earl Stanhope* (1721), it is just possible that such a person existed; Amhurst's *Protestant Session* shared the dedicatee. James Stanhope, *A True Copy of the Political Queries, relating to the constitution of the Roman Senate* (Curll, 1721) is another document in this confused history" (Baines and P. Rogers 348n52). Thus, Curll might have deliberately sent Pope on the wrong track when he claimed that "The Progress of Dulness" was written by Bond.

104 In the third book of the *Dunciad*s, the joke on Bond's obscurity is repeated. A passage from the 1728 *Dunciad* (originally not containing any names, gutted or otherwise) is slightly rewritten to read: "Lo Bond and Foxton, ev'ry nameless name, / All crowd, who foremost shall be damn'd to Fame?" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.151–52). The annotation plainly states: "Two inoffensive offenders against our poet; persons unknown, but by being mention'd by Mr. *Curl*" (3.151n, original emphasis).

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these practices (and many more) led to constant insecurity over which author existed in the first place and who was actually responsible for which work.[105] Even those dunces whose identity could be verified with certainty were in a constant ambiguous state between being and non-being, fact and fiction: given their obscurity and the ephemerality of their works, can they really be seen as ever having existed outside the *Dunciad*s?[106]

The 1729 Curliad*: Pope's Satire Backfires*

Pope's denial of Bond's existence bore fruit, though not exactly in the way he probably had hoped for. In his *Curliad* (addressing and imitating Scriblerus, hence the old-fashioned diction), Curll triumphantly counters Pope's charges:

> Thou callest my *Affirmation* in question concerning Mr. *Bond*, and most impertinently enquirest, *where his Satire against Mr.* Pope *is* [sic] *be found*? Enquire but of *One, who* (thou say'st in thy *Coll. of Test*[*imonies of Authors*]. p. 18.) *takes the Name of H. Stanhope*, and thou may'st know further; for the Verses thou hast cited in the said 18th Page, will, like a faithful Fescue, point thee out some others, in the same Copy, of a different Nature. Thou also askest, *Where was such a Writer as* Bond *ever heard of*? Take this Answer, he hath published an additional (Ninth) Volume to the *Spectator* – A new Version of *Tasso* hath he attempted – An original Poem called *Buckingham* House […] did he inscribe to the late *Duke*, who told him that, The said Poem, *would last much longer than the Building it praised* […] *Thus is th' Illusion turned upon thy self.* (Curll, *Curliad* 24–25, original emphasis)

Curll here finally provides background information on Bond, but the fact that Bond was known to, and esteemed by, the Duke of Buckingham is a rather embarrassing revelation for Pope.[107] John Sheffield, first Duke of Buckingham and Normanby (d. 1721), was a close friend of his. Their friendship dated from the very beginning of Pope's career, and Pope supervised a posthumous edition of Buckingham's works, which got him and the printer into trouble because the works were openly Jacobitical (cf. Mack, *Life* 266; 396; Hone, *Alexander Pope in the Making* 176–88). A man called John Ward later defrauded Buckingham's

105 Though Pope's note makes it seem like these practices were especially popular among Curll's Grub Street hacks, he can hardly claim innocence for himself. After all, the *Dunciad* is a masterpiece of elaborate obfuscation in concealing its author, publisher, place of first publication, and the author(s) of its many paratexts (see p. 109 n below).

106 The equivocal status of the dunces *within* Pope's satire – as both historical individuals and fictional types – is discussed in A. L. Williams 73–76.

107 For a brief discussion of Bond's poem "Buckingham House", see Beutner 222. For further information on the publishing history of "Buckingham House", see P. Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher* 223–24 and Hone, "Pope, Bathurst, and the Duchess of Buckingham" 401n17.

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widow and son, for which he was attacked in the *Dunciad*s and elsewhere in Pope's works (see chapter 2.2.2.2). Curll's passage thus makes Pope aware of the fact that he had satirised (and been satirised by) someone who was respected by his late friend and that Bond was, at least in this instance, above a mere Grub Street hack.

Pope's strategy of first publishing an 'incomplete' poem – thereby luring the dunces out of their hiding to identify and incriminate themselves or each other – may have been clever, but here it severely backfired. Pope chose not to react to Curll's revelation. In all later editions of the *Dunciad*s, he continues to emphasise Bond's obscurity and to deny his very existence (cf. *Dunciad* 2.126n). Unsurprisingly, Pope only included his enemies' reactions in subsequent editions when these reactions served (or could in some way be construed to serve) his own aims. Instances in which Pope's victims convincingly challenged his portrayal of them never found their way into the satire, and the *Dunciad*s defiantly continued to make statements that dunces had already proven wrong.

Conclusion

In summary, Pope's strategy of provoking the dunces into publishing responses to his poem that could be used against themselves or against other dunces usually[108] relied on two things: the deliberate production of ambiguity on his side and his enemies' attempts at disambiguation. These attempts at determining meaning could either be closely guided by Pope (as in the case of the passage on Duckett and Burnet), or they could be relatively unrestrained (as in case of Bond). Pope's quotes from his enemies' attempts at disambiguation generally served to incriminate them even further and to justify his satire against them by proving that they were indeed as duncical as the poem makes them out to be.

Yet, the relationship between the *Dunciad*s, the dunces' responses, and Pope's use of these responses was not entirely characterised by antagonism. Rather, there was an almost playful character to the interaction between Pope and his enemies, which can be seen as a kind of tennis game, in which they are constantly hitting the ball back and forth, always hoping to provoke the opponent into making a disastrous mistake. This process did not only take place in the time between the 1728 and the 1729 *Dunciad* but, in fact, until the publication of the final 1743 version. The annotations in the *Dunciad*s hence record an ongoing interaction between Pope and his opponents. One might even go so

108 The only exceptions are, as stated above, those cases in which Pope simply included incorrect statements about the dunces. In many cases, these falsehoods provoked them enough to make them publish pedantic and whimsical corrections.

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far as to argue that the satirist and his enemies had a symbiotic relationship: Pope needed the dunces to behave in the most duncical ways possible to provide further material and justification for his satire, and the dunces were not entirely ungrateful for the publicity the *Dunciad*s afforded them. As a passage in Appendix II of the *Dunciad*s (included from 1729 onwards) explains, booksellers used Pope's satire as advertisement for the dunces' publications:

> [Works] of an elder date, having lain as waste Paper many years, were, upon the publication of the Dunciad, brought out, and their Authors betrayed by the mercenary Booksellers (in hope of some possibility of vending a few) by advertising them in this manner — 'The Confederates, a farce. By Capt. Breval (for which he was put into the Dunciad.) An Epilogue to Powel's Puppet-show. By Col. Ducket (for which he is put into the Dunciad.) Essays, *etc*. By Sir Richard Blackmore. (N. B. It was for a passage of this book that Sir Richard was put into the Dunciad.)' (*Dunciad* 370)

Such advertisements were indeed published (all of them in the *Daily Journal*, the first appearing on 13 June 1728) (cf. "Just Publish'd" 2). This can be seen as yet another (unintentional) ambiguity of the *Dunciad*s: what was designed to be the death-stab to the dunces' careers actually served to promote them.

Apart from mere playfulness and provocation, the decision to first publish an 'incomplete', sparsely annotated version of the *Dunciad*s also served several other satirical and literary purposes. First of all, in an age that was rather sceptical about personal satire (see p. 120 n below), it would have seemed quite gratuitous to provide the dunces' names from the start. After Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* and the pirated Dublin edition of the poem had given the names anyway, there was no harm in Pope printing them as well. Furthermore, if Pope had annotated the poem and left no blanks in it from the very beginning, he would have deprived readers of their guessing game; he would have stifled controversy and reader involvement. Annotating the poem would have partly fixed its meaning – there would have been much less room for speculation and interpretation. The dunces would only have commented on the interpretations put forward by Pope; they would not have proposed their own, to which he, in turn, could later react. Pope could, of course, have provided *ambiguous* notes on ambiguous passages from the very beginning, but the very fact that readers first had to grapple with the ambiguous passages themselves sensitised them to the different meanings these passages may have. They were thus alerted to the ambiguities of the poem, which heightened the comic effect of those notes (like the one on Burnet and Duckett) in which Pope later ironically claimed that certain passages are not ambiguous at all. Moreover, by publishing the poem with missing or incomplete names in a first step, Pope to some extent

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prepared readers for the fact that many of the names would be exchanged in the course of the next fifteen years. If the names had been included in the first editions, the substitution of names might have seemed strange or unnecessary, but as it was, this 'exchange game' had been signalled from the very beginning. Lastly, by publishing only the poem in the beginning, Pope forced readers to peruse the whole poem first, without being distracted by the lengthy footnotes that would follow a year later – yet another way of guiding his audience. He thus ensured that they would be able to follow the plot of the satire, which is nearly impossible when one constantly moves between the poem and the notes in a first reading of the *Dunciad*.

The annotations discussed in this chapter show something that is true for almost all of the notes in the *Dunciad*s: despite the letters by Swift and Oxford written after the publication of the 1728 *Dunciad*, in which they ask Pope to explain and disambiguate his work, and despite his promises in the 1729 *Dunciad* to do exactly this, most of Pope's annotations perform the complete opposite of disambiguation.[109] Instead, they pile new ambiguities on the ambiguities that already exist in the poem – often by pretending to disambiguate. They hence pretend to perform the function of xenographic annotations, i.e. to clarify and even fix meaning, while constantly flouting this very function.

2.2.2 *Manipulated Annotations: Steering Interpretation – Reinforcing Satire – Adding Provocation*

Pope's witty use of the dunces' responses to his poem and notes is provocative enough. But in a few of his annotations he even goes a step further.[110] In these, he offers distorted facts under the guise of providing seemingly uncorrupted, direct quotes from his enemies' works and omits passages from his sources that might reflect badly on himself (cf. Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 160; Brooks-Davies 27; Colomb 172–78; Pfersmann, "Le siège de Commentariopolis" 111; Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 182; Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered* 234; A. L. Williams 60–76). Needless to say, these manipulated notes provoked even more outraged responses which could then again be incorporated into the annotatorial apparatus of later editions.

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109 However, there are, of course, also a few notes that are unambiguous and purely explanatory, especially those that were already included in the sparsely annotated 1728 *Dunciad* (with the exception of the very first note in the 1728 version which is appended to the line "Still *Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first*?").

110 These notes include: *Dunciad* 1.109n; 1.133n (discussed below); 1.200n; 2.3n; 2.58n; 2.142n; 2.148n; 2.207n; 2.268n; 2.283n; 2.411n; 2.413n; 3.34n (discussed below); 3.266n; 4.122n; 4.284n (discussed below); and 4.523–24n.

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Rather than being dismissed as inadvertent blunders, these distortions have to be seen as deliberate manipulations on Pope's side. There are several indications that he had his enemies' works readily available and, thus, did not have to rely on his memory or secondary sources when quoting them. For one, Pope owned several bound volumes in which he collected all attacks written against himself (cf. Weber 12; Ossa-Richardson 267). Furthermore, he often provides detailed and correct bibliographical information (including line and page numbers) on the works that he is quoting and misquoting in his notes. Lastly, as will also be shown below, Pope strategically revised annotations in later editions so as to manipulate them even more, evincing a clear awareness of what he was doing.

Despite the presence of these manipulated notes, the first heavily annotated version of the *Dunciad*s ironically claims to strive for the greatest accuracy possible: in the "Publisher's Advertisement" to the *Dunciad Variorum*, the 'publisher' (most likely Pope himself) favourably contrasts the extensively annotated 1729 version of the poem with the sparsely annotated 1728 version. He asserts that he

> cannot answer but some mistakes may have slipt into it [the 1729 edition], but a vast number of others will be prevented by the names being now not only set at length, but justified by the authorities and reasons given. (1729 *Dunciad* 122)

At first glance, the "Advertisement" hence creates the impression that all effort has been made to render the annotations for the *Dunciad Variorum* as reliable and facts-based as possible. It suggests that the commentary for the 1729 *Dunciad* is trustworthy because, unlike most commentaries, it was not prepared "upon conjectures, or at a remote distance of time" and because some of the notes have been directly "transcribe[d] from Jacob, Curl, and other writers" (1729 *Dunciad* 123). The majority of Pope's contemporaries – accustomed to texts teeming with ironies, hidden meanings, disguised authorships, or just plain lies – would, of course, have taken such statements with a grain of salt (cf. Bannet 227).[111] After all, they could not even be sure where,

111 For examples of such texts, one need only think of Isaac Bickerstaff's (i.e. Swift's) obituary on the still living John Partridge; Pope's anonymous *Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, Concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of John Dennis*, which professed to be the real doctor's account of Dennis's 'madness'; and Pope's anonymous praise of his own pastorals in the *Guardian* (no. 40, 27 Apr. 1713). The last was written after the *Guardian* had featured five different articles on pastorals that ignored Pope's contributions to the genre. Pope then responded to this slight by submitting his own article, the beginning of which misleadingly suggested that it had been written by the author of the first five (cf. Mack, *Life* 216–18; for the *Narrative of Dr. Norris*, see Mack, *Life* 222–25).

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when, and by whom the first authorised edition of the work at hand had been published.[112]

However, rejecting every piece of information that is provided in the *Dunciad*s apparatus as untrustworthy would be just as misleading as blindly relying on the protestations of accuracy made in the "Advertisement". The factor that makes it so difficult for readers to evaluate the (un)reliability of the *Dunciad*s commentary is the coexistence of trustworthy and incorrect information: the manipulated annotations are, in fact, far outweighed by notes that provide more or less accurate quotes and factual information (cf. Colomb 178; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 98).

Hence, many of Pope's quotes from others' works for the most part adhere to the xenographic convention of correctness (for this convention, see p. 3 above), while only a few deliberately violate it. This mix makes it exceedingly hard for readers to spot those annotations in which Pope indeed manipulates his sources: if every single note in the *Dunciad*s contained misleading information or manipulated quotes, evaluating the veracity of the annotations would be easy. In this case, readers would be reassured that that they can simply dismiss the whole commentary as an untrustworthy but entertaining fabrication that bears no relation to reality. However, because there are so many notes that more or less faithfully quote their sources, those that indeed tamper with facts or sources are particularly treacherous. This is especially so when these manipulated notes make great efforts to create the impression that they are straightforwardly quoting other texts. Thus, the practice of using numerous mostly factual notes and interspersing them with a few incorrect ones ensures the possibility that readers can fall for these manipulated notes in the first place. This juxtaposition of faithful quotes, manipulated ones, and downright lies in the *Dunciad*s commentary results in "a curiously ambiguous realm of half-truth in which the reader wanders, never quite sure as to the validity of what he reads, never certain what is fact, what is make-believe" (A. L. Williams 62). Readers' approach to the *Dunciad*s annotations is thus marked by constant uncertainty. In this respect, the notes that profess to contain unadulterated quotes from and about Pope's enemies function in a way that is similar to many of the notes that are signed by the annotator personas Scriblerus and Bentley: as will be shown in chapter 2.3, these latter unsettle readers' expectations by sometimes

112 The title page of the very first edition of the 1728 *Dunciad* misleadingly asserts that the work had already been printed in Dublin and that it was now being reprinted by Anne Dodd in London (cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" xvii–xviii; Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728* 17; 20; also see p. 85 n above). To make things even more complicated, the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* – both in the "Advertisement" and the "Letter to the Publisher" – falsely claims that none of the 1728 editions had been approved for publication by their author.

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containing helpful and sensible elucidations, sometimes misleading nonsense, and sometimes information that can be interpreted in either way.

While the helpfulness of Scriblerus and Bentley's notes often remains a matter of interpretation, the accuracy of the notes that allegedly provide reliable quotes can, theoretically, be easily determined by consulting their sources. Nevertheless, for Pope's contemporaries, this strategy of disambiguation by drawing on external material would have been extremely cumbersome. They would have had to resort to old newspapers that were published years before the *Dunciad*s (and that most readers threw away shortly after reading)[113] or to the obscure and ephemeral works of the dunces. Thus, for contemporary readers, it was nearly impossible to fact-check every single note.

However, the annotations do not lead astray all groups of readers to the same degree. For one, those contemporary readers who lived in London and who were well-acquainted with current events, gossip, and scandals (be they political, religious, or literary) would most likely have fallen for fewer misrepresentations than those outside certain political or literary circles, those living far away from the capital, as well as later readers.[114] Furthermore, as will be shown below, at least one of the manipulated annotations does not require topical but rather classical knowledge in order to be detected. The annotations that manipulate facts and sources thus also differentiate between different readerships – between the uninitiated and those who more or less shared Pope's own horizon of understanding. Hence, at least some of the manipulated notes serve a double function of leading the ignorant astray and of entertaining those in the know by their clever and subtle manipulation of facts. In what follows, I will discuss three examples that show what different methods Pope used when tampering with his sources as well as what purposes he employs his manipulated annotations for.[115]

113 Rumbold explains that "[m]ost newspaper readers threw away old papers, then as now. The surviving runs of eighteenth-century newspapers now used by scholars represent for the most part the collections of a very few individuals, notably Charles Burney" (editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.314).

114 Incidentally, in Swift's famous letter from 16 July 1728, it was especially this latter readership – those living "twenty miles from London" or reading the *Dunciad* a few years after its publication – that Swift wanted Pope to annotate his poem for (Pope, *Corr.* 2: 504).

115 The most-discussed example of one of Pope's manipulated notes (the one on Edward Ward's ale house; 1729 *Dunciad* 1.200n; *Dunciad* 1.233n) will not be analysed here since it neither relies on nor results in ambiguity in any major way. For discussions of this annotation, see Colomb 172; McLaverty, "Pope and Giles Jacob's *Lives of the Poets*" 30; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 98; C. Thomas 281–82; and Troyer 200.

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2.2.2.1 Redirecting Attacks and Exploiting Ambiguity: The 'Duncification' of Theobald

When Cibber wanders through his library in the first book of the 1743 four-book *Dunciad*, he sees "hapless Shakespear, yet of Tibbald sore" (*Dunciad* 1.133). The entire annotation for this line is rather long; the manipulated passage only appears towards the end of the note:

> This Tibbald, or Theobald, published an edition of Shakespear, of which he was so proud himself as to say, in one of Mist's Journals, June 8, 'That to expose any Errors in it was impracticable.' And in another, April 27, 'That whatever care might for the future be taken by any other Editor, he [Theobald] would still give above five hundred Emendations, that *shall* escape them all.' (*Dunciad* 1.133n, original emphasis)

Theobald indeed contributed an article to *Mist's Journal* on 27 April 1728 (that on 8 June 1728 is signed *W. A.*, but Pope attributed it to Theobald as well). Both articles ridicule Pope's Shakespeare edition and defend Theobald against Pope's attacks in the *Peri Bathous* and the 1728 *Dunciad*. The *source* of the quotes is therefore correct. The quotes themselves, however, – and in the latter case the dubious authorship attribution to Theobald – are manipulated by Pope in such a way as to make Theobald seem like an "arrogant fool" (editor's n for *Dunciad* 1.133n). A juxtaposition of Pope's note and the two original statements illustrates how exactly Pope changed his source texts:

Annotation in the *Dunciad*s	Original passages
'That whatever care might for the future be taken by any other Editor, he [Theobald] would still give above five hundred Emendations, that *shall* escape them all.'	And as my *Remarks* upon the whole Works of *Shakespeare* shall closely attend upon the Publication of his [Pope's] Edition, I'll venture to promise without Arrogance, that I'll then give above *five hundred* more fair *Emendations*, that shall escape *him* and all his *Assistants.* (Theobald, 27 April 1728, original emphasis)
'That to expose any Errors in it was impracticable.'	And it being impracticable to expose any Errors in that Work [Theobald's *Shakespeare Restor'd*], he [Pope] was extravagantly witty on some earlier Publications of his Antagonist[.] (Theobald (attributed), 8 June 1728)

In the first passage, Pope manipulates Theobald's text by omitting the attacks targeted at himself and instead pretends that Theobald claims to be superior

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to all present and future editors of Shakespeare: Pope and "all his *Assistants*" in the original passage become "any other Editor" in the *Dunciad*s. Theobald's promise in the original text (omitted by Pope) that his own edition of Shakespeare's works shall "closely attend upon" Pope's edition reinforces that his focus rests on Pope's blunders alone.[116] Theobald's criticism of Pope's editorial practices is hence turned into an arrogant assertion of his own infallibility. Intriguingly, this manipulated version of Theobald's text did not appear until 1743. In the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* and in the different editions of Pope's 1735/36 *Works*, the sentence is very similar to Theobald's original and reads: "'That whatever care for the future might be taken either by Mr. *P.* or any other assistants, he would still give above 500 Emendations that *shall* escape them *all*'" (1729 *Dunciad* 1.106n, original emphasis). Even though this note does not quote Theobald verbatim either, it remains clear that he claims to be only superior to Pope and his assistants, not to Shakespeare editors in general. This part of the annotation hence gained its manipulative character only years after its first appearance. It is one of many experiments in rephrasing, adding, and omitting information that Pope undertook in order to make the annotations best serve his satirical purposes.

By contrast, the passage from the 8 June essay quoted above was manipulated from the very first version of the *Dunciad Variorum* onwards. This manipulation extends to the authorship of the article itself. As noted above, the article on which Pope bases his note was published anonymously, and it is impossible to either rule out or confirm Theobald's authorship with certainty.[117] Pope hence makes use of the ambiguity regarding the authorship of his source text and disambiguates it in his annotation without informing readers that the article may, in fact, not have been written by Theobald after all. This is all the more important as the effect of the note, which strives to provide

116 The edition prepared by Pope that Theobald refers to is the "next Edition of that Poet [Shakespeare] which we are to have in a few Months" (Theobald, 27 April 1728). This second edition of Pope's Shakespeare appeared in 1728 and adopted many of the emendations that Theobald had suggested in his *Shakespeare Restor'd*. Theobald's own edition of Shakespeare would eventually appear in 1733.

117 As Appendix II of the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* shows, Pope himself was not quite certain about Theobald's single authorship of the article. In the Appendix, he attributes the article from 8 June 1728 to "*Dennis, Theobald*, and others" (1729 *Dunciad* 330, original emphasis). Some copies of the 1729d-f *Dunciad*s attribute the article to Theobald, Dennis, Moore Smythe, Concanen, and Cooke (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 330var). In these editions, all five names are 'gutted'; the full names are supplied from 1735a onwards (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 330var). This latter attribution is retained in Appendix II of the 1743 *Dunciad in Four Books*. Thus, readers who closely perused the Appendix (and who had a good memory) might have noticed the discrepancy between Pope's two different authorship attributions for the same article.

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further proof of Theobald's arrogance, relies on readers' belief that this article was likewise authored by him.

Apart from the dubious authorship attribution, the original passage is yet again rephrased in such a way as to make Theobald appear convinced of his own infallibility. While the original text seems to mean that it was impossible *for Pope* to find any errors in Theobald's *Shakespeare Restor'd*, Pope's annotation has Theobald claim that it is altogether impossible to find any mistakes in his compilation of Pope's editorial blunders.[118] To this aim, Pope prefixes the quote with an introductory sentence claiming that "Theobald, published an edition of Shakespear, of which he was so proud himself as to say[:]". This introduction hence insinuates that what follows is proof of Theobald's arrogance and conceals the fact that, in the original article, the utterance occurs only in the context of attacking Pope. Apart from omitting the attack specifically targeted against himself, Pope here also exploits the ambiguity of the term "impracticable". In the source text, the expression can either be read as (1) 'because it is *altogether impossible* to find any mistakes in *Shakespeare Restor'd*, Pope had to attack Theobald's other works', or as (2) 'even though it is *theoretically possible* to find mistakes in *Shakespeare Restor'd*, Pope was too incompetent to detect them and hence had to attack Theobald's other works'. This second reading is favoured by Rumbold in her note on the passage: she argues that what the original article actually says is that it was "'impracticable' *for Pope* (who is assumed to lack the necessary training in the technicalities of Shakespearean scholarship) to decide whether or not Theobald's textual emendations were correct" (editor's n for *Dunciad* 1.133n, original emphasis). Although this second reading really seems more plausible than the first one, the context of the whole article from 8 June 1728 itself does not do much to resolve the ambiguity. At points, the author even seems convinced that it is indeed nearly impossible to find any mistakes in *Shakespeare Restor'd*. He asserts that Theobald had the "Right to restore the original Text", which he "performed to the Satisfaction of the Publick" and goes on to explain that Theobald enraged Pope "by doing justice to poor *Shakespeare* over him" (Theobald (attributed), 8 June 1728, original emphasis).[119]

118 Furthermore, Pope's manipulation of the first quotation creates the absurd impression that Theobald would easily produce five hundred emendations to his own *Shakespeare Restor'd*, which contradicts Theobald's claim that it was "impracticable" to find errors in his work.

119 The article from 27 April 1728, which was definitely published by Theobald, is a bit more modest: "If Mr. *Pope* is angry with me for attempting to restore *Shakespeare*, I hope the Publick are not. Admit my Sheets have no other Merit, they will at least have this: They

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Whatever the author of the original article may have meant when he asserted that it was "impracticable to expose any Errors" in *Shakespeare Restor'd*, Pope's note disambiguates the sentence. He makes use of the fact that the term "impracticable" is both inherently ambiguous and not sufficiently disambiguated in the article from 8 June 1728. Then, he exploits this potential for ambiguity by transplanting the phrase "impracticable to expose any Errors" into a new context.[120] This context disambiguates the word in such a way that the preferred reading of "impracticable" becomes the one that – as Rumbold has noted – is *less* plausible in this context and makes the real Theobald appear just as arrogant as the fictional 'Tibbald' in the *Dunciad*s.

Since – as noted above – the greatest majority of Pope's contemporaries threw away newspapers after reading, they would not have had access to the original articles in order to falsify Pope's quotes. The manipulated annotation is hence also potentially *manipulative*. Judging by, for instance, the entry on Theobald in the *New and General Biographical Dictionary* (vol. 12, 1784), the reprint of this entry in Chalmers's *General Biographical Dictionary* (vol. 29, 1816), and an entry in *The Georgian Era* (vol. 3, 1834), even some scholars were taken in by Pope's note, because they apparently drew their information on Theobald from the *Dunciad*s rather than the original articles in *Mist's Weekly Journal*.[121] In the case of this annotation, hence, Pope succeeded in manipulating readers and damaging his enemy's reputation for more than a century. What might have contributed to this is that, unlike other dunces (e.g. Edward Ward, see p. 110 n above), Theobald did not publish lengthy corrections of these lies about him.

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will awaken him to some Degree of *Accuracy* in his next Edition of that Poet" (original emphasis).

120 A similar strategy is also employed in *Dunciad* 1.200n, in which Pope misquotes Cibber in order to portray him as being arrogant enough to name himself in the same breath as William of Orange and James II.

121 The *New and General Biographical Dictionary* explains that "[i]n 1726, Theobald published a piece in octavo, called 'Shakespear Restored:' of this, it is said, he was so vain as to aver, in one of Mist's 'Journals,' 'that to expose any errors in it was impracticable' (144; repr. in Chalmers 246). The entry in *The Georgian Era* reads: "In 1726, he published *Shakespeare Restored, or Specimens of Blunders committed and unamended on Pope's edition of that author*; of which he had the impudence to aver, 'that to expose any errors in it was impracticable'" (525). It is likely that these reference works relied on Pope's note in the *Dunciad Variorum*, because – when they later quote the passage about Theobald being able to provide five hundred more emendations than Pope or his assistants – their phrasing is much closer to Pope's 1729 note than to either the 1743 *Dunciad* note or Theobald's original newspaper article from 27 April 1728.

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2.2.2.2 Omission of Redeeming Information – Manipulating Italicisation: Turning Contradiction Into Confirmation

Like the note discussed above, Pope's annotation for *Dunciad* 3.34 is gradually manipulated in the course of different editions. However, while the note on Theobald partly relies on rephrasing passages that originally cast Pope in a bad light, this next example omits information that is favourable to the victim of his satire. What is more, by employing strategic italicisation, it even turns the dunce's defence into yet another attack against the dunce himself. The annotation in question is appended to the following simile: "As thick as bees o'er vernal blossoms fly, / As thick as eggs at Ward in Pillory" (*Dunciad* 3.33–34; 1729 *Dunciad* 3.25–26). The beginning of the first version of the note (printed in the 1729a-e editions) reads as follows:

> *John Ward of Hackney*, Esq., Member of Parliament, being convicted of forgery, was first expelled the House [sic], and then sentenced to the Pillory on the 17th of *Febr*. 1727. Mr *Curl* looks upon the mention of such a Gentleman in a Satire, as a *great act of barbarity*. *Key to the* Dunc., *3d Edit. p.* 16. And another Author reasons thus upon it. *Durgen*, 8vo, pag. 11, 12, 'How unworthy is it of *Christian charity* to animate the *rabble* to abuse a *worthy man* in such a situation? It was in vain! he had no *Eggs* thrown at him; his *Merit* preserv'd him['']. (1729 *Dunciad* 3.26n, original emphasis)

In this early state, the annotation is still rather faithful to its sources. Pope merely italicises those passages in his enemies' texts that he finds particularly ridiculous (e.g. a convicted forger being called "worthy gentleman"), translates the poetry of *Durgen* into prose, and specifies that no eggs had been thrown at Ward, which is not mentioned in *Durgen*.[122] Even though the word "Eggs" is emphasised in this version of the note, the addition "It was in vain! [...] his *Merit* preserv'd him" clarifies that John Ward was spared by the onlookers. This first version of the annotation hence cannot be understood in any other

122 In *Durgen*, the poet Edward Ward (not related to the pillorised John Ward) writes of Pope: "Who, for the lucre of a golden Fee, / Broke thro' the Bounds of Christian Charity, / To animate the Rabble, to abuse / A Worthy, far above so vile a Muse? / Tho', all in vain, for merit kept him free", and, a few lines later, asked what caused Pope's "Muse to execrate so poor / A Libel on so brave a Sufferer?" (Ward, *Durgen* 11). In her note on the passage, Rumbold suggests that the satire which Edward Ward (and Curll in his *Key*) accused Pope of writing against John Ward is *To Bathurst* (editor's n for 1728 *Dunciad* 3.26n). This, however, is impossible, given that *To Bathurst* was published in 1733, whereas Curll's *Key* was already published in 1728 and E. Ward's *Durgen* in 1729. Paul Baines suggests that E. Ward and Curll might be referring to the anonymously published *Verses Occasioned by the Judgment Passed on John Ward of Hackney* (ca. 1726) (cf. Baines, "'Ward in Pillory'" 208). It is not clear whether Pope really had a hand in this work.

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way than that neither eggs nor anything else was thrown at Ward. As a consequence, the information given in this version of the note contradicts what is asserted in the main text, namely that Ward had been pelted.

It is only in the second version of the note that the contradiction between poem and note is addressed.[123] From the edition 1729f onwards, Pope omits the fact that "[i]t was in vain! he had no *Eggs* thrown at him; his *Merit* preserv'd him". Instead, he adds at the very end of the note:

> But it is evident this verse cou'd not be meant of him [John Ward]; it being notorious, that no *Eggs* were thrown at that Gentleman: Perhaps, therefore it might be intended of Mr. *Edward Ward* the Poet [1743 adds: when he stood there]. (1729f *Dunciad* 3.26n var.; *Dunciad* 3.34n, original emphasis)

This second version of the note is ambiguous: depending on how we interpret "no *Eggs* were thrown at that Gentleman", the phrase can either still be read as 'nothing was thrown at John Ward' (as in the first version), or as 'something was indeed thrown at him, and it was not eggs (but rather something much worse)'.

There are three factors here that strongly bias readers in favour of the second, insulting reading. Firstly, the use of the word "notorious" rather than the more neutral 'well-known' suggests that something scandalous and potentially embarrassing for Ward will follow. Even though "notorious" can also be used in a neutral sense, the negative connotations were well-established in Pope's age.[124] Secondly, by omitting that "[i]t was in vain! [...] his *Merit* preserv'd him", Pope deprives his readers of the knowledge that the onlookers were on Ward's side and spared him. Thirdly, the italicisation of "Eggs" is kept and, in combination with the other two factors, opens the possibility for readers to imagine that something worse may have been thrown at J. Ward. After all, readers' world knowledge told them that eggs (even rotten ones) were one of the least disgusting and dangerous things that could be thrown at someone in the pillory. Other options included "animal blood and guts; mud, stones, bricks, and rocks; pots and pans; human and animal excrement; and animals, both dead and alive" (Oliver 160).

123 From the 1735a edition onwards, there is also a third change, which is not relevant in the context of this chapter. It occurs at the beginning of the note and is here underlined by me: "Mr *Curl* (having likewise stood there) looks upon the mention of such a Gentleman in a Satire" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.26n var; *Dunciad* 3.34n, original italics).

124 For instance, Johnson's dictionary explains that the term is "commonly used of things known to their disadvantage" (S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, "notorious").

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Each factor taken by itself does not necessarily imply that J. Ward was abused by the mob, but all three combined suggest a reading that deviates from the actual facts and continues the poem's attack against J. Ward. In this second version of the note, Pope takes the factual statement "no *Eggs* were thrown at that Gentleman" and, through his word choice, italicisation, and omission of context, turns what used to be a correction of his poem into an even worse insult. Hence, readers unacquainted with J. Ward's actual fate were – depending on which edition of the *Dunciad*s they had access to – either presented with a correct but still ridiculing account or with a manipulative fabrication. Furthermore, the second version of the note allows Pope to ridicule two enemies at the same time: John Ward (whom Pope accused of trying to defraud his friend, the Duchess of Buckingham) and the poet Edward Ward, who had attacked Pope in his *Durgen* and *Apollo's Maggot in his Cups*.[125]

2.2.2.3 Omission: Differentiating Readerships and Reinforcing Concerns of the Text as a Whole

The manipulated annotations on Theobald and the two Wards above are examples of Pope's attempt to reinforce and justify the poem's attacks against his enemies by tampering with quotes from their works. In the next annotation, which is taken from the "Imitations" section of the notes, however, Pope is not misquoting a duncical text but a canonical Latin source. In the 1743 four-book *Dunciad*, we are presented with a scene in which a governor presents his student to the goddess Dulness and proudly declares:

> Receive, great Empress! thy accomplish'd Son:
> Thine from the birth, and sacred from the rod,
> A dauntless infant! never scar'd with God. (*Dunciad* 4.282–84)

The last line, an annotation claims, is directly translated from Horace: "Hor.: 'sine Dis Animosus Infans'" (*Dunciad* 4.284n). Indeed, at first sight this appears perfectly plausible; the literal translation of the text quoted in the annotation

125 In *Durgen*, Edward Ward had criticised Pope for trying to stir up the mob against John Ward. When Pope used these lines from *Durgen* in the first version of the present annotation, Edward Ward complained in *Apollo's Maggot in his Cups* that Pope used italicisation "to render the Sense of that part of the Poem call'd *Durgen* […] as ridiculous as may be" (Ward, *Apollo's Maggot* 32). This example shows that Pope's manipulations of his source texts did not go unnoticed, at least not by the authors of these texts. By adding the attack against Edward Ward in the second version of the note, Pope might also have had in mind Curll's identification of the gutted name "W—d" (as it is written in the 1728 *Dunciad*) as referring to Edward rather than John Ward in the first edition of his *Key to the Dunciad* (cf. editor's n for Pope 3.34n).

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is "without the Gods a fearless child". However, as Valerie Rumbold points out in her note on the annotation, Horace's line in his *Odes* 3.4.20 is actually "*non* sine dis animosus infans" (my emphasis). While Horace implies that the child is fearless because it is *not* without the Gods, the governor in the *Dunciad*s claims that his student is "dauntless" because he was never taught that there is any power greater than himself (cf. editor's n for Pope 4.284n).[126] The manipulated quote in the annotation hence suggests that there is a different relationship between the 1743 *Dunciad* passage and its Latin source than there actually is: rather than being a direct quote, the line in the 1743 *Dunciad* means the complete opposite of Horace's.[127]

The manipulated intertextual annotation attempts to distinguish between two classes of readers: those who know classical literature well enough to realise that Pope alters the original text and those who do not and have to blindly rely on the note. The first are in on the joke; the latter are led up the garden path, and their ignorance is ridiculed by Pope. Since Pope only provides Horace's name rather than a full bibliographical reference, it would have been very difficult for readers without a detailed knowledge of Latin literature to quickly verify the quote themselves. For these readers, the manipulated annotation also becomes a manipulative one that disguises as a helpful piece of information only to ridicule those who have to put their trust in it.

In contrast to the two examples discussed above, this annotation does not twist facts to make Pope's enemies appear arrogant or to insinuate that they are much more unpopular than they really are. Rather, it is a subtle nod to those readers who share Pope's horizon of education. The note also draws special attention to the governor in the poem, who – even though he is supposed to teach the student under his tutelage – apparently does not know much about classical literature himself and misquotes Horace in his address to Dulness. Without the annotation, the governor's blunder would most likely have been overlooked even by readers with a classical education because the content

126 This passage on the student having never been "scar'd with God" can be seen as anticipating the attack on deism two hundred lines later, which begins: "We nobly take the high Priori Road, / And reason downward, till we doubt of God: / Make Nature still incroach upon his plan; / And shove him off as far as e'er we can: / Thrust some Mechanic Cause into his place / […] / Or, at one bound o'er-leaping all his laws, / Make God Man's Image, Man the final Cause" (*Dunciad* 4.471–478).

127 Pope's poem also manipulatively explicates the meaning that the misquoted Latin text is supposed to have. The Latin phrase "Sine Dis Animosus Infans" does not necessarily imply that the Gods would otherwise have been used to scare the child. It merely means that the child is without the Gods and that it is fearless. The causal relationship between the Gods' absence and the child's dauntlessness is only forged in Pope's description of the student having been "never scar'd with God".

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of the line is too general and too deviant from the original text to prompt a recognition of the intertextual reference. Hence, the note performs two different functions for two different readerships. It leads the ignorant astray into thinking that the 1743 *Dunciad* here faithfully quotes Horace, implicitly ridicules them for their gullibility, and, for the educated, subtly draws attention to an incident in the poem that chimes in with the overall concern of the 1743 *Dunciad* – the decline of culture and learning.[128]

Conclusion

The three examples discussed here are not meant to create the impression that Pope's annotations teem with lies and misrepresentations.[129] Rather, I agree with Geoffrey Colomb and James McLaverty, who point out that Pope's tampering with the image of the dunces "happens less than we have been led to believe" (Colomb 178) and that "Pope's games with dunces' own words in the notes are surprisingly mild" (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 98). Annotations that manipulate their sources to such an extent as those discussed in this chapter are not too common, and many of Pope's long quotes (e.g. from Dennis's dedication to Duckett, 3.179n, discussed in chapter 2.2.1.2) are quite faithful to their original.

Nevertheless, the three manipulated notes discussed here offer revealing insights into Pope's strategic use of quotes and his careful revision process. As we have seen, Pope sometimes uses lexical and syntactical ambiguities existing in his source texts and disambiguates them by slightly manipulating the phrasing or italicisation, or by transplanting them into different contexts. Throughout the different editions, the portraits of Theobald, John Ward, and Edward Ward in these notes lose their resemblance to reality and are molded into proofs of what is asserted of them in the poem.[130] The discussion has also

128 Pope's concern about the decline of classical learning can be seen, for instance, in a slightly later remark in book 4, where it is related that during his Grand Tour the student "[s]poil'd his own language, and acquir'd no more; / All Classic learning lost on Classic ground" (*Dunciad* 4.321–322). See also A. L. Williams 31; 46; 53.

129 This has been argued by Williams. According to him, the annotations in the *Dunciad*s present "a distortion of history so magnificent and well-conceived that it has imposed upon the dunces a character Pope knew they never actually possessed" (A. L. Williams 60). He goes on to argue that Pope is "proceeding with unembarrassed ease through misrepresentation and misquotation […] And it is just where the factual or historical semblance is most pronounced that one finds the policy of misstatement most patiently and thoroughly pursued" (71).

130 In this respect, I agree with Williams who suggests that "Pope 'essentializes' for the reader perfect dunces – in whom, however, the clay of the historical original is still to be seen" (A. L. Williams 71).

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shown that the potential of these notes to manipulate readers' understanding and interpretation of the satire depends on different factors, such as readers' education, their acquaintance with London's literary and social life, and their access to Grub Street publications. Especially the note containing the incomplete quote from Horace has illustrated that what leads one reader astray might just as well be a clever inside joke to another. The fact that many primarily reliable annotations in the *Dunciad*s are interspersed with manipulated ones and the fact that most readers did not have the resources to verify Pope's notes renders all annotations in the *Dunciad*s ambiguous to some extent. Readers can never be sure whether or not the note they are just reading is trustworthy, and uncertainty arises as to whether the notes can be seen as part of an external, explanatory paratext or as a fictional part of the satire. Pope's use of lexical and syntactical ambiguities in order to manipulate single annotations hence results in the global, ontological ambiguity of the annotations in the *Dunciad*s as a whole.

2.2.3 *Social Networking and Self-Presentation: Creating and Undermining 'Good Pope'*

> [C]haracter, so to speak, constitutes the most effective means of persuasion. (Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* 1.2.4, transl. Freese)

The *Dunciad*s pose a considerable problem to Pope's authorial ethos as a satirist. They claim to defend culture, learning, and virtue, but employ personal rather than general satire,[131] make jokes about 'pissing contests' and diving in

131 Satirists in the Augustan age were divided over the question whether or not it was permissible to attack individuals by name instead of targeting general human vices and shortcomings (cf. Marshall, *Practice of Satire* 62). Some condemned personal satire as shameful, unprincipled character assassination, some hailed it as the only effective form of satire, and others regarded it as acceptable under certain circumstances. Addison, for instance, was strictly opposed to personal satire, as his articles in the *Spectator*, no. 23 (27 Mar. 1711) and no. 451 (7 Aug. 1712) show (cf. Addison, "There is nothing that more betrays" and Addison, "There is nothing so scandalous to a Government").

Pope himself was often criticised by his friends and allies for his penchant for personal satire (cf. Snead 208–09). He defends the practice as the most effective means of deterring wrongdoers in two famous letters to his friend John Arbuthnot (cf. Pope, *Corr*. 3: 419; 423). (The first letter cited here is a revision of the second and was written with an eye to publication, eventually appearing in the 1737 *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope and Several of his Friends*, cf. editor's n in Pope, *Corr.* 3: 418–19). Even late in his career, in "Epilogue to the Satires written in 1738. Dialogue II (One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight)", Pope felt the need to justify his satiric practice of attacking (and naming) individuals (see Pope, *TE* 4: pp. 313–14 ll. 10–23).

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sewers, include references to such things as Eliza Haywood's "cow-like udders" (*Dunciad* 2.164), and, as we have just seen, sometimes maliciously misquote and misrepresent the dunces. In short, the *Dunciad*s often make Pope appear less like a fair-minded, morally upright satirist and more like an abusive libeller. The dunces, quite understandably, drew attention to these passages and argued that Pope was a slanderer, hypocrite, and backstabber who certainly did not have the necessary ethos to accuse others of immoral behaviour. They asserted that Pope's satire does not have the greater public good in mind; he only wants to insult his personal enemies and wrote the *Dunciad*s because he is "unable to live in Peace with Society" (Duckett et al. 14). His opponents also claimed that Pope's attacks are not simply motivated by malice but also by his desire to damage the reputation of possible rivals. He is "an Author, whose Pride could bear no Fame but his own" (Duckett et al., Append. 2), a "Person Poetically mad, jealous of Fame, and envious of every Rival" (Duckett et al. 6). And James Ralph goes so far as to argue that the victims of Pope's satire are neither his rivals nor his private foes but altogether "innocent and deserving Persons" whom Pope attacks simply to "gratify a malicious Temper" (Ralph iv).[132]

Dryden, as his "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" reveals, was in two minds about the question. On the one hand, he argues that personal satire "is a dangerous sort of Weapon, and for the most part Unlawful. We have no Moral right on the Reputation of other Men" (Dryden, "Discourse" 59). On the other hand, he names two justifiable motives for writing personal satire. The first of them is revenge, i.e. "when we have been affronted in the same Nature, or have been any ways notoriously abus'd, and can make our selves no other Reparation" (Dryden, "Discourse" 59). The second is when the person being attacked has become a "Publick Nuisance. […] 'Tis an Action of Virtue to make Examples of vicious Men. They may and ought to be upbraided with their Crimes and Follies: Both for their own amendment, if they are not yet incorrigible; and for the Terrour of others" (Dryden, "Discourse" 60). While the former reason is only an excuse, the second is "absolutely of a Poet's Office to perform" (Dryden, "Discourse" 60). For more detailed information on Augustan attitudes towards (and defences of) personal satire, see Marshall, *The Practice of Satire* 60–62 and Elkin 118–45.

132 Matthew Concanen (yet another dunce), however, acknowledges that the victims of the *Dunciad*s are not innocent and that the poem reacts to earlier attacks against Pope. Nevertheless, he also points out that Pope provoked the attacks against himself by satirising the dunces even earlier: "it ought to be inquired whether Mr. *P.* did not bring it upon himself, by being very particular in abusing other Men's Characters and Persons, both in the *Profound*, and his other Miscellanies. That Method may be justly taxed with want of Wit, but I think it behoves Mr. *P.* and you [the fictional author of the *Dunciad*s whom Concanen addresses], to shew that you can support a Controversy without having recourse to Scurrilities of that kind; you had a fair Opportunity of doing so in your *Dunciad*, and if you had, you had persuaded more Readers of the Justice of your Cause, than ever you are likely to do as it is: but that you have neglected, and your own Behaviour

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But the perhaps most damaging accusation was that the *Dunciad*s even attack Pope's loyal friends.[133] When the first (and sparsely annotated) version of the *Dunciad*s was published in 1728, the unauthorised Dublin edition and Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* filled in some of the blanks with the names of Pope's idols and associates (cf. editor's n for 1728 *Dunciad* 1.94; 2.273).[134] For instance, the expression "furious *D—n*" (1728a-b *Dunciad* 1.94) was disambiguated to "furious Dryden" in the Dublin edition. And "*W—y's* rage" (1728e *Dunciad* 1.94) was read as an allusion to Pope and Atterbury's friend Samuel Wesley (the younger) by Curll in his second edition of the *Key* (cf. Curll, *Key 2nd ed.* 8). (For further examples, see below, p. 128.)

Unsurprisingly, such damning (mis)identifications provided Pope's enemies with further material for attacks against his character. For example, reacting to the 1728 *Dunciad*, Matthew Concanen claims that "like *Almanzor* he [Pope] knocks down Friends and Foes, the Stranger and the Acquaintance fare alike in his poem" (Concanen xi–xii, original emphasis).[135] Similarly, Duckett, Burnet,

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is such, that your Mouths are eternally stopped, from exclaiming with reason, at the ill usage given you by your Adversaries" (Concanen ix, original emphasis).

133 Even earlier, at the very beginning of his career, Pope had been confronted with allegations that he had betrayed his benefactor Wycherley, that he "wrote the epistle in praise of his own *Pastorals* under Wycherley's name, and that he stole lines from the old man and called them *An Essay on Criticism*" (MacCarthy 214). In *Codrus*, Edmund Curll and Elizabeth Thomas claim, for instance, that as soon as Pope "found he had obtain'd an establish'd Character, he fell foul on his first and greatest Benefactor [Wycherley], by ridiculing him behind his Back, which unworthy Proceeding Mr. *Wycherley* never forgave to the last Hour of his Life" (Curll and E. Thomas 6–7, original emphasis). (This falling-out between Pope and Wycherley never happened: "the relationship between Pope and Wycherley lasted, though not always smoothly of course, until the dramatist died"; MacCarthy 214). The same authors accuse him of having a penchant for backstabbing and opportunism in general: "He had a peculiar Talent at private Slander, and his Absent Friends were always served up for a Dissert [sic] to the Present; which agreeable Faculty indear'd him to the several Parties which then reign'd in the Nation: He was a *Whig* with the *Whigs*, a *Tory* with the *Tories*" (Curll and E. Thomas 7, original emphasis). Pope's dealings with Elijah Fenton and William Broome over the *Odyssey* translation provided yet another basis for attacks against his character (cf. Mack, *Life* 412–15; P. Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher* 259–61).

134 In the case of the Dublin edition, the misidentifications were probably the result of pure ignorance, but Curll – Pope's long-time enemy and an expert of the London publishing scene – most likely knew exactly what he was doing and deliberately filled in the names of people Pope admired.

135 Almanzor is the hero of Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada*. He first abandons the king Boabdelin to support Abdalla (the king's brother) but later forsakes Abdalla and rejoins Boabdelin. Many contemporary readers saw him as a traitor – an interpretation that Dryden rejects in "Of Heroique Playes", which serves as a preface to *The Conquest of Granada* (cf. Dryden, *Works* 11: 16). Furthermore, Almanzor unwittingly fights against his

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and Dennis contend that Pope's friends "feared his Abuse more than his Enemies", that he ungratefully repaid Addison and Steele's support by writing "a Satyr upon both these Gentleman, (as he did afterwards an abusive Libel on one of them)", and that Pope is "never happy, but when he is creating Feuds and Animosities even amongst the most intimate of his Acquaintance" (Duckett et al. 14; 17). In short, he "writes Libels, threatens, forgives, punishes, and is really the *Drawcansir* of the Age" (Duckett et al. 2, original emphasis).[136] Curll, in his *Key to the Dunciad*, likewise asserts that Pope is a "*Blockhead*, who has, at one Time or other, *Betrayed* or *Abused* almost every one he has conversed with" (Curll, *Key 1st ed.* iii–iv, emphasis reversed). In a similar vein, Edward Ward claims that Pope "lost more Friends by his *Dunciad*, than ever he got by his *Homer*" (Ward, *Apollo's Maggot* 40, original emphasis).

The undiscriminating libeller, the megalomaniac poet who 'bears no brother near the throne', the unprincipled opportunist, the traitor of his friends – such accusations called for an answer. One answer consisted in Pope's decision to fill in most of the blanks in the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* and thus to clarify that they do *not* refer to his friends.[137] He also added annotations that provide information on the dunces' misdeeds, show that many of them had attacked him first, and quote the dunces' harsh condemnations of each other. Furthermore, and this will be the focus of the present chapter, Pope included 'social networking' notes in the *Dunciad*s from 1729 onwards. These are annotations in which he publicly displays and fosters his friendly, literary, and political relations, making clear who belongs to his circle and who does not. Some of these are unambiguous and exclusively strive to portray him as a loyal friend and generous poet. They also serve the double function of promoting Pope's associates *and*

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own people (it is only at the end of the drama that he learns that he is not a Moor but a Spaniard), and he is characterised by an "innate urge to self-aggrandizement" (Law 395).

136 Drawcansir is a character in *The Rehearsal* by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. He is a parody of Almanzor in Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada* (cf. editor's n for Buckingham 4.1.101). Drawcansir is "a fierce *Hero*, that frights his Mistress, / snubs up Kings, baffles Armies, and does what he will, / without regard to numbers, good manners, or justice" (Buckingham 4.1.102–04, original emphasis). His attitude to loyalty is best summarised by the following remark: "Let petty Kings the names of Parties know, / Where e'er I come, I slay both friend and foe" (Buckingham 5.1.331–32). Drawcansir is also an arrogant drunkard (cf. Buckingham 4.1.223–47; 5.1.337–38).

137 In the "Advertisement" to the 1729 *Dunciad*, Pope claims that his main motive behind printing the dunces' names in full was "*his care to preserve the Innocent from any false Applications, whereas in the former editions which had no more than the Initial letters, he was made, by Keys printed here, to hurt the inoffensive, and* (*what was worse*) *to abuse his friends, by an impression at* Dublin" (1729 *Dunciad* 122, original emphasis). His other reason for printing the names was, of course, to 'damn the dunces to fame' (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.152).

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of emphasising that he is a disinterested arbiter of taste who is absolutely willing to give credit where it is due. Hence, these notes suggest that he does not attack the dunces because he is jealous of them or because he is malicious and abusive in general but because they deserve it.[138] In these cases, Pope uses his social relations as proof of his morally impeccable character which, in turn, serves as a justification for his biting satire: the otherwise peace-loving and amiable man is forced to attack the dunces in order to stop them from wreaking further havoc.[139] He commends those who deserve it, and he satirises those who deserve it.

In other cases, however, Pope employs *ambiguous* social networking annotations. These notes can be interpreted both as praises of, and as veiled insults against, the persons addressed in them, thus undermining his alleged good-will and integrity again. Such annotations are doubly ambiguous, raising questions about the function(s) that they serve with respect to the individual mentioned in the note as well as about Pope's ethos and self-presentation. Is he really a generous author who wants to promote his acquaintances, praise his friends,

138 One need only think of Pope's compliment to Congreve, Addison, and Prior (cf. *Dunciad* 2.124n), the annotation reminding readers that the *Dunciad*s extol "Mr. Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Atterbury, Mr. Dryden, Mr. Congreve, Dr. Garth, Mr. Addison; in a word, almost every man of his time that deserved it" (*Dunciad* 2.140n), the compliment to Lord Chesterfield (cf. *Dunciad* 4.43n), and the note commemorating Pope's friend William Cleland, which is appended to the very end of the "Letter to the Publisher" (cf. *Dunciad* 39). In a letter to Swift, he even explains that his principal aim in the *Dunciad*s is "to perpetuate the friendship between us, and to shew that the friends or the enemies of one were the friends or enemies of the other" (Pope, *Corr*. 3: 57). The *Dunciad*s indeed immortalise his and Swift's friendship. For a discussion of these annotations as 'monuments to friendship', see Griffin 220–21. For Pope's wish – expressed throughout his works – that especially his friendships should be remembered, see Fraser 308–10. For the argument that Pope's works attempt to immortalise the worthy and to damn the unworthy to either oblivion or lasting disgrace, see Fraser *passim*, and Scodel 277–311. The note on Addison, however – if read in the light of Pope's other annotation 'praising' Addison (cf. *Dunciad* 2.75n, discussed at p. 215f. below) – is potentially rather ambiguous.

139 For further studies of Pope's self-presentation, also see G. Egan, *Fashioning Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century*; Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning"; Hess, *Authoring the Self*; and Lawlor, "'Chaos dark and deep'".

Pope's emphasis on friendship throughout his works as well as life is almost proverbial (cf. Fraser 308–10). In his biography of the poet, Mack concludes that Pope "had an unusual talent for friendship. One wonders where among the poets […] another may be found, who succeeded so happily over many periods of many years in binding to himself and in binding himself to, such a diversity of men and women, young and old, literary and otherwise" (Mack, *Life* 186). For more on friendship in the Augustan Age – especially its political dimension –, see Emrys Jones's *Friendship and Allegiance in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, which includes chapters on the Scriblerians' response to the South Sea Bubble as well as on Pope's *Epistle to Bathurst*.

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provide a fair-minded assessment of his rivals, and offer measured responses to his detractors? Or does he simply enjoy ironically (or hypocritically) putting on the mask of the ethical satirist while underhandedly defaming his enemies and sometimes even his friends? In the latter case, Pope's (ironic or serious) self-righteous posture would be more provocative than a straightforward libel for libelling's sake could ever be.

Pope's ambiguous social networking notes are symptomatic of the moral equivocality of the *Dunciad*s as a whole. They thus contribute to one of the work's global ambiguities, namely the question whether Pope's satire strives to present a brave and honourable man's defence of culture, learning, and morals against dangerous and threatening dunces, or whether it simply constitutes a witty, slanderous attack against personal enemies whom Pope regarded as incompetent and unlikable but eventually harmless.[140] Is Pope trying to mend the morals of his contemporaries? Or is he only ironically (or hypocritically) pretending to do so – randomly abusing his enemies while innocently claiming to write for the greater good?[141]

With the *Dunciad*s wavering between high-minded satire and obscene libel, explanatory notes mixing facts and manipulations, and social networking notes alternating between straightforward, genuine compliments and ambiguously worded underhand praise, Pope's self-presentation is at a crossroads: What face does he want to show to the world? That of the mischievous prankster who wrote a bawdy parody of the first psalm and *A Full and True Account of a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison: On the Body of Mr. Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (1716)? Or that of the moralist who would later go on to write the *Essay on Man* and the *Moral Essays*? Teeming with ambiguities, the *Dunciad*s mark a point in Pope's career at which he still struggles (and also downright refuses) to find a unified moral stance that reconciles his love for petty (and often rather dirty) Grub Street fights and his aspirations to be a high-minded ethical writer.

In what follows, I will discuss two examples of ambiguous social networking notes – the first a rather blatant example, the second a very subtle one. Their ambiguities serve very different purposes. In the former, Pope revels in the game of both praising and insulting fellow writer Aaron Hill. Here, Pope presents himself as a generous, fair-minded author *and* very openly uses irony to undermine this image again. In this note, ambiguity is employed as a playful,

140 For the argument that the *Dunciad*s are "more good fun than anything else" and that "[t]he poem does not present the dunces as satanic figures but rather dresses them up in Halloween costumes", see Siebert 221.

141 For these ambiguities, also see, for instance, p. 105 above.

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easily recognisable strategy. The second annotation, however, which is concerned with Pope's friend John Gay, can be interpreted as involving quite a lot of underhand dealing. Its ambiguity is so subtle as to be almost imperceptible. *If* one chooses to describe it as ambiguous – a perhaps controversial choice – it seems to be designed to preserve Pope's positive self-presentation while still giving him the opportunity to implicitly criticise his friend. The ambiguity of first note, thus, is designed to playfully call into question Pope's ethical image, while the second still serves to protect it.

2.2.3.1 Arbiter of Morals or Witty Libeller? – Pope and/vs. Aaron Hill *1718–1720: The Beginning of a Rivalry*

For more than a decade, interactions between Pope and fellow author Aaron Hill were characterised by a mutual exchange of ambiguous praises. In order to understand Pope's equivocal social networking annotation on Hill, this tense relationship needs to be traced to its very source. Pope and Hill had known each other (though only through their writings) since at least 1718. In that year, Hill published *The Northern Star*, which was full of praise for the Czar of Russia. In the preface addressed to Pope, Hill explains that Bernard Lintot (Pope's publisher) had told him of Pope's claim that "Printing any thing in Praise of the *Czar of Russia* would be receiv'd as a Satyr on the [British] Government" (Hill, *The Northern Star* n.pag., emphasis reversed). Alluding to Pope's Catholicism and the fact that some of his friends were Jacobites, Hill ironically muses that this warning must have sprung from "*the Fulness of* [Pope's] *known Zeal for our Church and Constitution*" and later insinuates that Pope detects treason everywhere because he is himself a traitor (n.pag., original emphasis). He then goes on to claim that his friend John Dennis had cautioned him about Pope being "a Kind of *Foe* to every Body but [Him]-Self" and argues that, in criticising Hill's poem, Pope hypocritically violates the principles laid down in the *Essay on Criticism* (n.pag., emphasis reversed). Though these accusations are rather harsh, Hill's preface also acknowledges Pope's talent as a poet. This ambivalence towards Pope is perhaps best summarised by the following statement: "my Esteem for Your *Genius* as a Poet, is so very considerable, that it is hardly exceeded by my Contempt of Your Vanity" (n.pag., emphasis reversed).[142]

Unsurprisingly, this preface sparked a rather sharp response from Pope, which is, however, not extant. We only know of this response because Hill reacted to it in the preface to his 1720 poem *The Creation*.[143] In this preface, Hill reprints what he claims to be a letter that he had sent to Pope earlier, though

142 For a more detailed discussion of this preface, see Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 125.

143 The preface is also reprinted in Pope, *Corr.* 2: 35–36.

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it is not clear whether or not this is true. The preface is a rather double-edged apology for Hill's 1718 preface and applauds Pope for his aggressive counter-attack: Hill contends that Pope punished his "*Injustice, with more than double Sharpness, by* [his] *Manner of receiving it*" and that Pope "*overcomes his Enemies, by detaining their own Weapons*" (Hill, *The Creation* iv, original emphasis). In a more reconciliatory way, Hill's preface also highly praises Pope and claims that he is meant to "rebuild the sinking Honours of Poetry" of their age (v). Pope was not impressed by Hill's apology and privately commented that he was "more displeas'd, at your thinking it necessary to treat me so much in a Style of Compliment as you do in your letter" than at the original insult (Pope, *Corr.* 2: 36–37; cf. Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 125). As Christine Gerrard notes, Pope "may also have been piqued by the tone of some of the *Plain Dealer* essays" (a journal edited by Hill), which commented on his "(undeserved) popularity by comparison with Dennis's" and which criticised his Shakespeare edition (Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 125). Regarding the time between 1720 and 1728, not much is known about Pope and Hill's relationship. However, in his 1725 *The Battle of the Poets*, Thomas Cooke portrayed the two as enemies (cf. Gerrard 125).

1728: The Peri Bathous*, Hill's Retaliation, and the First* Dunciad

In 1728, another chapter was added to Pope and Hill's year-long battle of ambiguities. Pope revived the rivalry in the *Peri Bathous*, in which he included a certain "A. H." among the "*Flying Fishes"*, who are "Writers who now and then *rise* upon their *Fins*, and fly out of the *Profound*; but their Wings are soon *dry*, and they drop down to the *Bottom*" (Pope, *Art of Sinking in Poetry* 26, original emphasis). As so many of the comments that Pope and Hill made on each other, this categorisation wavers between compliment and insult. On 16 April 1728, Hill paid him back in the same coin in the *Daily Journal* (cf. Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 127): In a short poem, Hill has the devil of mischief claim that he and his brothers cannot wreak havoc anymore because Pope vanquished them, and that Pope unites "*Beauty, Wisdom*, and *Force*" (Hill, "A Copy of Verses" 1, original emphasis). This devil is answered by an angel, who explains to him that he need not fear Pope because

> *Pope* is *gelt*, in his Youth, for his Countrymen's Crimes,
> And his Lustre dim'd down, to the *Dusk* of the Times:
> God sent *Pain*, and *Impertinence*, Wit to controul,
> Gave the *Devil* his Body, and bid *Swift* take his Soul. (original emphasis)

Published almost exactly a month later, the 1728 version of the *Dunciad*s gives Pope the chance to retaliate by making "*H–*" one of the writers who participate in the sewer-diving contest:

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> *H–* try'd the next, but hardly snatch'd from sight,
> Instant buoys up, and rises into light;
> He bears no token of the sabler streams,
> And mounts far off, among the swans of *Thames*.
> (1728 *Dunciad* 2.273–76, original emphasis)

Yet again, Pope's assessment of Hill combines praise and insult. However, it seems that many contemporaries did not realise that this passage refers to Hill in the first place.[144] The first edition of Curll's *Key to the Dunciad* claims that it alludes to Walter Harte; the second and third editions name Hill only as a second possibility, still favouring Harte (see p. 14 in all editions of the *Key*). The unauthorised Dublin edition does not mention Hill at all and identifies John Hughes as the poet being alluded to. As Valerie Rumbold points out, "[b]oth suggestions [i.e. Harte and Hughes] were embarrassing, as Harte was Pope's protégé, and Hughes had been on excellent terms with Pope until his death in 1720" (editor's n for 1728 *Dunciad* 2.273). Thus, for readers of the 1728 *Dunciad*, the dubious praise for Hill remained in the background, while Curll and the Dublin edition portrayed Pope as a traitor to his friends. In the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, Pope would remedy this problem, though not in his usual way of simply spelling out the dunce's name.

1729: An Ambiguous Social Networking Note

Rather than giving Hill's full name in order to prevent further misidentifications, the passage in the 1729 *Dunciad* drops any hint to it entirely:

> Then ** try'd, but hardly snatch'd from sight,
> Instant buoys up, and rises into light
> He bears no token of the sabler streams,
> And mounts far off, among the swans of Thames.
> (1729 *Dunciad* 2.283–86)

The annotation on the passage then sets out to explain and morally evaluate this omission:

> This is an instance of the Tenderness of our author. The person here intended writ an angry preface against him, grounded on a Mistake, which he afterwards honourably acknowledg'd in another printed preface. Since when, he fell under a second mistake and abus'd both him and his Friend [i.e. Swift]. He is a writer of Genius and Spirit, tho' in his youth he was guilty of some pieces bordering upon bombast. Our Poet here gives him a Panegyric instead of a Satire, being edify'd

144 Nevertheless, Gerrard points out that the allusion to Hill is rather obvious since the "image of the sinking and surfacing poet was too like 'A. H.', the '*flying fish*' of *Peri Bathous*, to be accidental" (Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 128, original emphasis).

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> beyond measure, at this only instance he ever met with in his life, of one who was much a Poet; confessing himself in an Error: And has suppress his name, as thinking him capable of a second repentance. (1729 *Dunciad* 2.283n)

The annotation briefly summarises Pope and Hill's relationship up to 1728, alluding to Hill's attack against Pope in *The Northern Star*, his half-hearted attempt at reconciliation in *The Creation*, and his resumed criticism in the *Daily Journal*. It also congratulates Pope on this 'generous' decision to omit Hill's name and to refer to this writer in such a commendatory way. This note is doubly ambiguous: first, regarding its function with respect to Hill and, second, regarding Pope's self-presentation in it.

Commenting on the annotation, Curll argues: "This is a *pretended* Compliment to *Aaron Hill*, Esq; for I dare say he will not take it as a *real* one" (Curll, *Curliad* 27, original emphasis). This is not the complete truth. Compared to most other notes in the *Dunciad*s, this one is quite commendatory after all and even goes so far as to acknowledge Hill's "Genius and Spirit". In that respect, it is similar to the straightforwardly positive social networking notes cited above (see p. 124 n). Yet, its insulting overtones are rather obvious as well. Pope assumes the role of the arbiter of morals who schoolmasterly chides a minor dunce for his mistakes but graciously offers to forgive him if he but confesses his sins. Thereby, Pope slyly misrepresents the social and literary standing that Hill enjoyed when this note was published. Though he is a rather obscure author today, "[d]uring the period 1720–8, Hill emerged as perhaps the most important, certainly the most ubiquitous, man of letters in London literary life" (Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 62). He was, in fact, a "well-published author with extensive connections among the great and famous" (66).

However, as shown above, the practice of praising the other poet's talents and patronisingly bemoaning his misapplications of them had been a standard procedure between Pope and Hill from 1718 onwards. Hill was just as guilty of it as Pope was. The other textual strategies used in this note are more insulting. First of all, written in the third person (as it happens quite often in the *Dunciad*s), the annotation ironically pretends that it was not authored by Pope himself but by an anonymous editor. Written by an editor, this note would be rather innocuous; it would praise the author for omitting the name and – following the editor's duties – go on to explain the background of the passage. However, almost all contemporaries knew that Pope was responsible for the commentary on the *Dunciad*s.[145] The unconvincing manner of dissociating

145 In the "Advertisement" of the 1729 version of the *Dunciad*s, the 'publisher' claims that "[*t*]*he Commentary which attends the Poem, was sent me from several hands*" (1729 *Dunciad* 122, original emphasis). However, the fact that many of these notes are signed by a clearly fictional editor (Martinus Scriblerus) and the fact that in Pope's time concealing

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himself from the annotation thus highlights Pope's comic self-praise, which is especially provocative given that Pope mischievously identifies Hill while patting himself on the back for *not* identifying him. As shown above, many contemporary readers were not aware that Hill was the referent of the passage; it is only the detailed further information in the note that makes him identifiable.

Perhaps even more insultingly, the annotation somehow forgets to mention that it was Pope who had resumed hostilities by criticising Hill in the *Peri Bathous*, which, in turn, provoked Hill's satiric verses in the *Daily Journal*. In the note, Pope claims that Hill is simply mistaken for believing that "A. H." in the *Peri Bathous* refers to him ("a second mistake"). For this argument, Pope makes use of a strategy that comes up time and again in the *Dunciad*s (see e.g. chapter 2.2.1.2 and chapter 2.4.1). First, he confronts readers with an utterance that is theoretically ambiguous (here: "A. H." in the *Peri Bathous*) but of which he can be sure that it will be disambiguated by almost everyone in one specific way. As Hill later pointed out in a 1731 letter to Pope: "If the initial Letters *A.H.* were not *meant* to stand for my Name, yet, they were, everywhere, read so, as you might have seen in *Mist's Journal*, and other publick Papers" (Pope, *Corr.* 3: 167, original emphasis).[146] Later, Pope makes use of the (theoretical) ambiguity of his earlier utterance and ironically claims that everyone's disambiguation was wrong and that he meant something entirely different. The majority of readers of this note would hence have known that Pope was the actual aggressor and that Hill had nothing to apologise for – all the while Pope is ironically protesting his innocence.

With respect to Hill, Pope's annotation hence performs two very different functions. On the one hand, it indeed serves the purpose of social networking and makes a sincere though rather 'diluted' compliment to Hill. It even sparked

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or misattributing authorship was a common practice, most readers would have been able to guess that they could not trust the statement in the "Advertisement". It is not clear whether Swift or any of Pope's other friends also contributed notes; it is generally accepted that Pope wrote the overwhelming majority of annotations himself (cf. Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 194–95).

146 In the letter that preceded this one, Pope had (rather unconvincingly) reassured Hill that the initials in the *Peri Bathous* "were set at Random to occasion what they did occasion, the Suspicion of bad and jealous Writers, of which Number I could never reckon Mr. *Hill*. and most of whose Names I did not know. Upon this Mistake you were too ready to attack me, in a Paper of very pretty Verses, in some publick Journal. – I should imagine the *Dunciad* meant you a real Compliment, and so it has been thought by many, who have ask'd, to whom that Passage made that oblique *Panegyrick*? As to the Notes, I am weary of telling a great Truth, which is, that I am not Author of 'em: tho' I love Truth so well, as fairly to tell you, Sir, I think even that Note a Commendation" (Pope, *Corr.* 3: 165, original emphasis).

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a voluminous correspondence between Pope and Hill from 1731 to 1733, which – as might be expected – teems with half-insulting, half-praising remarks from both sides (cf. Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 138–44; also see Pope, *Corr.* 3: 164–77)[147]. On the other hand, though Pope's criticism of Hill is much less sharp than his attacks against the other dunces, his feigned innocence and ironic self-praise can be seen as even more provocative than straightforward insults. All things taken together, the ambiguity of the note points to the elaborate battle of the wits that was going on between Pope and Hill.

On a much larger scale, the annotation raises questions about Pope's authorial ethos in the *Dunciad*s and perhaps even his œuvre as a whole. In one respect, the note indeed serves Pope's positive self-presentation: by implicitly identifying Hill as the dunce of this passage, Pope repudiates the suggestions that it may refer to his friends Harte and Hughes, thus showing that he is not, in fact, a backstabber. Furthermore, the note stresses that Pope is capable of acknowledging the merits of someone who can to some degree count as his enemy: many dunces did much less to insult Pope than Hill did and yet were attacked more harshly and uncompromisingly than he was. Pope thus uses his half-compliment to Hill in order to suggest that he is able to judge other writers with a certain (albeit still limited) degree of impartiality, regardless of their transgressions against him. Hill satirised him, but Pope still has to acknowledge his talent; the other dunces, though often less offensive towards him personally, are so incompetent that they ostensibly deserve nothing but unmitigated condemnation. The note hence to some extent serves to portray Pope in a positive light and, as a welcome side effect, adds yet another insult against the victims of his satire.

However, the positive aspects of Pope's self-presentation are here far outweighed by the negative ones. Put briefly, the note suggests that the air of moral supremacy that Pope assumes in the *Dunciad*s is only an ironic pose and that

147 Hill also retaliated in his poems *The Progress of Wit* (1730) and *Advice to the Poets* (1731), both of which deplore that Pope misapplies his genius in petty fights with poets who are not worthy of his attention (cf. Gerrard, *Aaron Hill* 129–32; 135). Though these works praise Pope for his talent, they also harshly criticise his spitefulness and aggressiveness towards other writers. As always in Pope and Hill's relationship, commendation and condemnation go hand in hand.

In 1731, Pope offered to omit the note, but Hill declined (cf. Pope, *Corr.* 3: 171). From 1735 onwards, the *Dunciad*s contain a rewritten version of the note, which provides much less background information on Pope and Hill's quarrel but still retains its half-commendatory, half-insulting tone: "A Gentleman of genius and spirit, who was secretly dipt in some papers of this kind, on whom our Poet bestows a panegyric instead of a satyr, as deserving to be better employed than in Party-quarrels and personal invectives" (1729 *Dunciad* 2.283n var; cf. also *Dunciad* 2.295n).

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he is less concerned with saving his country's culture than with showing how masterfully he can outwit his enemies. He may not be more moral than the dunces, but he is artistically and comically superior to them – the ambiguous note calls into question his virtue but not his talent. At least in this annotation, Pope seems to be less interested in fighting for a worthy cause and more in enjoying the fight for its own sake. Read alongside such passages as the dunces' race (and the likewise ambiguous annotation on it, see chapter 2.4.2), the 'pissing contest', and the manipulated notes (see chapter 2.2.2), Pope's ambiguous social networking annotation on Aaron Hill severely complicates our image of the author in the *Dunciad*s. How much of his moral grandstanding is serious, how much of it is ironic? Does Pope disapprovingly stand aloof of the dunces' activities, or does he cheerfully participate in them?[148] And if we cannot trust the poet's pronouncements about himself, how can we trust his claims about the high moral aims of his satire? This global ambiguity is never resolved; on the contrary, many of the notes signed by Scriblerus and Bentley complicate the question even more (see chapter 2.3.4). The seemingly innocuous social networking note thus encapsulates one of the central cruxes of the *Dunciad*s: how much of them is serious and pessimistic moral satire, and how much of them is anarchic, playful, insulting fun?

2.2.3.2 Pope and John Gay: Ambiguous Praise?

In the annotation on Hill, Pope's strategic use of ambiguity is rather obvious. In the next example, however, readers are yet again confronted with the 'ambiguity of ambiguity', i.e. the question whether the author really intended for a passage to be read in more than one way, or whether we are simply reading

148 It has often been pointed out that, rather than completely distancing themselves from duncical Grub Street dealings, the *Dunciad*s actually partake in them. Fredric Bogel, for example, notes that "some have asserted that Pope suffers a kind of satiric contamination in the course of the poem [...] and begins to display a touch of what he attacks; or that he simply enjoys the dunces, taking pleasure in the low liveliness and sheer fecal fun of the games in book 2" (Bogel 844). He goes on to explain that the *Dunciad*s seem "to weaken certain significant barriers that the critics – like Pope himself – have a powerful stake in maintaining, in particular the barriers between wit and dunce, poet and Dulness, us and them" (Bogel 844). Regarding the passage about absurd plays in the first book of the *Dunciad*s, Howard Erskine-Hill contends that Pope is "adopting a much more richly ambiguous attitude to the creations of dullness. It is not his tactic to ridicule and dismiss, but to amplify and explore. With a part of his sensibility he is able to feel a kind of anarchic enchantment in dullness, which his lines express" (Erskine-Hill, *Pope* 31). Elsewhere, he also argues that Pope makes the dunces' world "more immediate to the reader by permitting something of its irrationality to enter into the structure of his poem" (Erskine-Hill, "The 'New World' of Pope's *Dunciad*" 814).

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too much into it. The note can very well be read as straightforward and unambiguous praise, but it is possible to detect a few hints that cast doubt on Pope's compliment. The ambiguity of this note – if it is indeed ambiguity – would not be playful; rather, it would be designed to both introduce and conceal the disparaging undercurrents of Pope's encomium.

The annotated line "Gay dies un-pension'd with a hundred Friends" is part of a passage that describes the consequences of an age characterised by 'Dulness' (1729 *Dunciad* 3.326). It deplores that even though Pope's friend John Gay is a highly successful and admired author, he has never received a royal pension that would enable him to lead a comfortable life without having to worry about money. In the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, the lengthy social networking annotation refers readers to

> Mr. *Gay's* Fable of the *Hare* and *Many Friends.* This gentleman was early in the friendship of our author, which has continued many years. He wrote several works of humour with great success, the *Shepherd's Week, Trivia*, the *What d'ye call it*, etc. […] [,] *Fables*, and lastly, the celebrated *Beggars Opera*; a piece of Satire which hit all tastes and degrees of men, from those of the highest Quality to the very Rabble. […] The vast success of it was unprecedented, and almost incredible. What is related of the wonderful effects of the ancient Music or Tragedy hardly came up to it: *Sophocles* and *Euripides* were less follow'd and famous. It was acted in *London* sixty-three days, uninterrupted; and renew'd the next season with equal applauses. It spread into all the great towns of *England*[.] […] Furthermore, it drove out of *England* the *Italian Opera*, which had carry'd all before it for ten years: That Idol of the Nobility and the people [i.e. the Italian opera], which the great Critick Mr. *Dennis* by the labours and outcries of a whole life could not overthrow, was demolish'd in one winter by a single stroke of this gentleman's pen. This remarkable period happen'd in the year 1728. […] (1729 *Dunciad* 3.326n, original emphasis)[149]

It is absolutely possible to read this note as nothing but a straightforward, unequivocal compliment to John Gay. Pope lists his friend's phenomenal successes and especially stresses the popularity of the *Beggar's Opera* which even managed to quell the public's love for Italian opera. This development was certainly greeted by Pope, who satirises Italian opera as "prepar[ing] the way, / The sure fore-runner of her [Dulness's] gentle sway" (1729 *Dunciad* 2.255–56).[150]

Despite Pope's seemingly unadulterated praise of Gay, one may detect several puzzling aspects in the annotation. First of all, it reads like an obituary

149 The annotation remains more or less unchanged (apart from three minor additions) in all later versions of the *Dunciad*s (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.326n var; *Dunciad* 3.330n).

150 For Pope's criticism of Italian opera in the *Dunciad*s, see, for example, P. Rogers, "The Critique of Opera in Pope's *Dunciad*"; Ness; and Hall.

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despite Gay being still alive and only in his mid-forties when the note was first published. (He died in 1732 – very unexpectedly – at the age of 47; cf. Mack, *Life* 581.) What adds to the puzzling temporality of the annotation is that, despite being published in 1729, it portrays 1728 as long past ("This remarkable period happen'd in the year 1728"). On the one hand, this may simply be yet another attempt to create the impression that the various *Dunciad*s editions were prepared by a (for Pope's contemporaries) *future* editor. One remark in the prefatorial "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", for instance, explains that the author of the *Dunciad*s "lived in those days, when […] Paper also became so cheap, and printers so numerous, that a deluge of authors cover'd the land", thus talking about Pope's present as if it were part of a distant past (1729 *Dunciad* 163).[151] The annotated passage itself is likewise ambiguous with regard to the question whether the events depicted in it (i.e. the downfall of culture and virtue) have already happened, are happening in 1728/29, or will (perhaps) happen in the future.[152] On the other hand, the portrayal of 1728 as long past might also hint at an attempt by Pope to claim that the success of the *Beggar's Opera* is already forgotten one year after its first staging. In other words, if Gay is so famous, why does he have to be annotated in such detail?[153] And even if one reads this note as a comment by a future editor, it implies that the *Dunciad*s will still be read by posterity while Gay and his works will be unknown to future readers and will have to be resuscitated by an annotation. True, these aspects might be explained away by arguing that Pope chose to briefly ignore logic in order to present a comprehensive overview of Gay's successes and to drive home his unadulterated admiration for his friend. Less charitably, however, one may contend that Pope tried to present himself as the more famous writer whose task it was to keep his friend's memory alive.[154] Social networking annotations create in-groups and out-groups. This one, thus, might show that even in the

151 For another example, see *Dunciad* 1.2n: "This happened in the Reigns of King George I, and II".

152 For the fact that the timeline depicted in the *Dunciad*s is often ambiguous (and sometimes even plainly contradictory), also see McTague 186–87.

153 The annotations right before and after the one on Gay (concerned with Burlington's success as an architect and Pope's engagement in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations) provide much less detailed information.

154 In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, Pope likewise presents Gay as a forgotten genius, who is remembered by few but Pope himself: "For they [the great politicians and courtiers] left me GAY, / Left me to see neglected Genius bloom, / Neglected die! and tell it on his Tomb" (Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot* 256–58). As David Nokes points out, this was far from the truth. In fact, Gay died rather wealthy and had a grand funeral at Westminster Abbey (cf. Nokes, "The Ambitious Pursuit" 139; Nokes, *John Gay* 6–7). Furthermore, even though "[i]n his letters Gay complains constantly at his failure to gain a suitable court employment", he

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in-group there is still a hierarchy – with Pope at the top of the coterie and Gay further towards the bottom.

The assertions that the success of the *Beggar's Opera* was "almost incredible" and that it was also enjoyed by "the very Rabble" may likewise be read as hidden jibes. And Pope's claim that Gay almost single-handedly "drove out of *England* the *Italian Opera*" hints at a fact that was rather embarrassing for Gay. Before the publication of the *Beggar's Opera*, he had been patronised by the Earl of Burlington, who was also "a founder director and chief shareholder in the Royal Academy of Music" and a great admirer of Italian operas (Nokes, "The Ambitious Pursuit" 140). According to David Nokes, after the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, "Burlington was not amused. As audiences dwindled and the Academy went into financial collapse, Burlington turned decisively against Gay" (141). Gay's greatest success thus resulted in him losing an important supporter. Furthermore, the annotation stresses that, in dealing a heavy blow to the popularity of Italian opera in Britain, Gay achieved one of the main goals of arch-dunce John Dennis. This may be read as a straightforward compliment (Gay succeeded by using his talent and humour, while the main result of Dennis's zealotry against the Italian opera was him being ridiculed), but one may also argue that Pope's dwelling on the comparison between Gay and Dennis may not be entirely flattering to Gay. All of these aspects taken together might suggest that the annotation actually to some degree criticises Gay. One reason why Pope may have chosen to include these jibes (if jibes they are) against Gay was that he possibly saw the "*Beggar's Opera* […] as a rival to his own work [the *Dunciad*s]" (Nokes, *John Gay* 452) and that he may have been slightly jealous of Gay's success (cf. 466).

Yet, Nokes seems to overstate the antagonism between Pope and Gay a bit. Mack, for instance, does not mention any animosities between the two in his biography of Pope. From the very few extant letters in which Gay refers to Pope and the *Dunciad*s (in 1728, before this note was added), it does not become at all clear whether they were still on very friendly terms or whether their relationship had cooled. In July 1728, Gay wrote to Swift: "Mr Pope is in a State of Persecution for the Dunciad, I wish to be witness to his fortitude, but he writes but seldom" (Gay, *Letters* 76). And in August 1728, he wrote to Pope that "[a]ll I could hear of you of late hath been by advertisements in news-papers", that the "indignation such fellows [as Curll] show against you, [proves] that you have more merit than any body alive could have", and he tells him "that Mr. Congreve admires, with me, your fortitude; and loves, not envys your

actually "benefited handsomely from both public and private patronage" (Nokes, *John Gay* 7).

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performance, for we are not Dunces" (Gay, *Letters* 77). Gay's complaints about Pope's failure to write him more often may just as likely be friendly banter as they may be an expression of sincere disappointment. Likewise, his insistence that he and Congreve admire the 1728 *Dunciad* because they are not dunces can be read as a self-confident joke among friends but also as a wary attempt at preventing Pope from satirising him in the next version of the *Dunciad*s if he does not show due admiration. One of Pope's remarks to Swift in 1728 is equally hard to assess: he explains that

> [t]he only Courtiers I know, or have the honour to call my friends, are John Gay and Mr. Bowry; the former is at present so employed in the elevated airs of his Opera, and the latter in the exaltation of his high dignity (that of her Majesty's Waterman) that I can scarce obtain a categorical answer from either to any thing I say to 'em. (Pope, *Corr*. 2: 473)

Again, the comment may simply be amicable and ironic teasing, but it may also imply that Pope believes Gay to be too arrogant about a work for which, in Pope's opinion, he deserves just as much (or little) praise as Mr. Bowry for being a boatman to Queen Caroline.

All of these remarks taken together, it becomes apparent that it is impossible to decide how much friendship or animosity Pope and Gay actually felt for one another in 1728 and 1729. Their letters to and about each other are a bit sarcastic indeed, but it should not be forgotten that they were, after all, written by the foremost ironists (and pranksters) of the age. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Gay wrote any letters in which he reacted to the 1729 *Dunciad* and especially to the note about himself. If he did, these are no longer extant.

The lack of context makes it difficult to decide whether Pope's social networking annotation on Gay is an example of unmitigated praise that is simply couched inelegantly, or whether Pope strategically ambiguated the note to slyly criticise Gay while ostensibly extolling him. Unlike the annotation on Hill, in which Pope's attack against the other writer and ironic subversion of his own virtuous authorial persona are pretty obvious, the note on Gay remains puzzling in its ambiguity. It certainly does not contain any direct reproaches but is phrased so equivocally that it invites (or at least allows for) a negative interpretation of Gay's career. And given the fact that Pope meticulously composed and revised his annotations, it is rather hard to believe that he did not notice that his commendation could also be interpreted as reprehension. *If* Pope intended to covertly criticise Gay, his use of the 'ambiguity of ambiguity' ensures that he can have his cake and eat it too: he can indeed rebuke Gay – but in such an equivocal way that this criticism does not reflect badly on himself and undermines his self-presentation as a loyal, honest friend. To critics

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who might cite this annotation as proof that Pope was not as generous and faithful to his associates as he liked to claim, Pope could convincingly respond that they simply misunderstood the meaning of the note. Here, Pope's use of ambiguity would not be playful but rather a safety measure. It does not serve to undermine his virtuous self-presentation but to protect it.

Conclusion

Based on its mix of straightforwardly positive and ambiguous social networking annotations, the 1729 *Dunciad* can be seen as a transitional work with regard to Pope's self-presentation and interaction with his peers. In his earlier works, Pope only rarely refers to his personal relationships in order to create a positive public image and authorial ethos for himself as well as to publicly interact with his allies.[155] And in his post-1729 works – especially the *Moral Essays* (1731–1735) and the (meticulously selected and sanitised) *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* (1737)[156] – Pope's social networking passages (both in the main texts and the notes) are more or less unequivocally positive. Maynard Mack, for instance, writing about the voice in Pope's later satires in general, concludes that one of the personas that Pope adopts in them is that of "the man of plain living, high thinking, lasting friendships; who hates lies, slanders, lampoons; who laughs at flatteries of himself[,] [...] the satirist as *vir bonus*, the plain good private citizen" (Mack, "The Muse of Satire" 88–89, original emphasis).

155 The self-annotations in the *Pastorals* and the *Essay on Criticism* which commemorate his friendships were only added in the 1736 *Works*. There are, however, a few short early poems in which Pope refers to his friendships (though in the main text rather than in the notes), e.g. "Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford" (1722).

156 In 1735, Pope managed to trick his enemy Curll into publishing an edition of his letters that Pope himself had "strategically selected and edited" (Stephanson 3). In 1737, Pope protested against Curll's edition, claiming that the letters had been published against his will. In the same year, he published two 'official' editions of his letters (cf. Stephanson 3). For a detailed publishing history of the letters, see McLaverty, "The First Printing and Publication of Pope's Letters".

John Butt summarises the core aspects of Pope's epistolary self-fashioning as follows: "In so far as anyone can resolve what character he will choose to exhibit to the world, Pope had resolved upon the character of the Good Man. [...] [T]here can be little doubt that Pope designed the publication of his letters to exhibit this view of the dutiful son, the kind-thoughted friend, the well-bred host, the disinterested critic of society, yet warm in wishes for his country's good and patient under attack: in short, the man of plain living, high thinking, and unimpeachable integrity" (Butt 76). Raymond Stephanson's analysis of the letters is in the same vein. According to him, they depict Pope as a "loyal friend, devoted son, charming gallant, favorite of elder statesmen of wit, and man of conscience" (Stephanson 4). Pope's published correspondence can hence be described as "one of the great self-promotional texts of the eighteenth century" (Stephanson 1), in which Pope "substantiated his satiric ethos of the good man and the good poet" (W. L. Jones 52).

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The 1729 *Dunciad* can thus be seen as the first work in which Pope made ample use of social networking as a means of positive self-presentation and as the *only* work (apart from the later *Dunciad*s and the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*)[157] in which he partly undermines his virtuous public image again. In the case of Aaron Hill, this is done rather overtly. Here, Pope playfully raises doubts about his self-created public image of the justified satirist and, ultimately, about the allegedly moral motivation behind the *Dunciad*s as a whole. In this instance, Pope risks his virtuous authorial ethos in order to strategically ambiguate his work and to render a straightforward interpretation of its satiric aims and underlying values impossible. And in the case of the much subtler note on John Gay, Pope possibly employs the 'ambiguity of ambiguity' to implicitly criticise his fellow author without severely damaging his own image of the loyal friend. All things considered, Pope's networking annotations establish, reinforce, and ambiguate his authorial persona, and they allow readers to witness elaborate, carefully constructed social interactions within the literary world.

2.3 Mimicking Emendatory and Interpretative Notes in the *Dunciad*s: Scriblerus and Bentley

Two Understudied Annotatorial Personas

The *Dunciad*s after 1729 are not simply heavily annotated works. As the title of the 1729 version indicates, they pretend to be *variorum editions*, which

157 The *Epistle to Arbuthnot* has often been discussed with respect to social networking and self-presentation – though most have concentrated on the unequivocally positive aspects of Pope's self-fashioning in this work. It is argued that Pope's "self-justification as a satirist" revolves around his loyalty to Arbuthnot as well as his being a "friend of virtue and mankind" (Davidow 156). The fact that "Pope has earned and kept the friendship of a good man" is strategically employed to show "that he must be worthy of such friendship. Arbuthnot is both a satiric point of reference, and a guarantee of Pope's good character" (Dixon 192). The *Epistle* strives to confirm that Pope is not "a mad dog satirist" and "perpetrator of unprovoked literary outrages" but "a man of civility and humanity, as well as of acumen, who has borne the extremest provocation that a character so constituted can bear" (Olson 26). Towards the end of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (381n), Pope even appends a note containing an obituary on his parents, in which he contradicts rumours that his enemies spread about them and relates information on his parents' families, occupations, and death. Pope even prints the full epitaph that he had inscribed on their monument at Twickenham. For a discussion of this note, see Scodel 259.

Nevertheless, Pope's many ironic references to his friends (not in the notes but the poem itself) and his harsh attack against Addison cast considerable doubt on his positive, virtuous self-presentation. Thus, like the *Dunciad*s, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* can be seen as an example of ambiguous, self-ironic social networking and self-presentation.

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means that they claim to compile the remarks of many different earlier critics and commentators on the poem.[158] Indeed, though many of the notes in the *Dunciad*s are unsigned, many others are attributed to a variety of 'annotators'. Some of them are real persons like Edmund Curll, Edward Ward, and James Ralph, who commented on the satire in great detail but never, strictly speaking, produced an annotated edition of the work. In their cases, Pope's notes more or less faithfully quote remarks made by actual people in a similar way as real variorum editions do.[159] In other cases, however, the *Dunciad*s include comments written by Pope himself but ascribed to Martinus Scriblerus (a fictional persona) and to Richard Bentley (a real textual critic).[160] Scriblerus's notes were included from the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* onwards, whereas the first annotations signed by Bentley appeared in the separately published 1742 fourth book of the *Dunciad*s. In the 1743 four-book *Dunciad*, Scriblerus's and Bentley's previous notes were retained and several annotations by Bentley added to the first three books. Their notes mainly mimic two forms of xenographic annotation: textual critical emendations and interpretative comments.

Of these two annotator personas, Scriblerus has received the greater attention by far, but there is substantial disagreement over his role in the *Dunciad*s. The core controversy revolves around the question whether Scriblerus primarily acts as Pope's mouthpiece and provides helpful explanations or whether he is mainly the victim of Pope's satire and should be ridiculed for his incompetence and naivety. Aubrey Williams, for instance, acknowledges that Scriblerus is often characterised by his "comic and pathetic unawareness" but argues that he nevertheless offers "textual insights", "guide[s] the reader to a better vision of all the foolery", and sheds light "on elements in the poetic text likely to be overlooked by a casual reader" (A. L. Williams 81–82). Likewise, Frederick

158 For a brief overview of the history and the main characteristics of variorum editions, see p. 56 above.

159 But also see examples of annotations in which Pope deliberately misquotes his enemies, chapter 2.2.2.

160 Bentley is not the only real-life character in the *Dunciad*s to whom annotations are spuriously attributed. One note is signed by Lewis Theobald (an annotation on the title of the work, appended to the very beginning of the first book). Two other notes are allegedly written partly by Scriblerus and partly by Theobald (cf. *Dunciad* 2.183n; 3.36n). One note is presented as the joint work of Theobald and the dubious bookseller Edmund Curll (cf. *Dunciad* 1.50n). The multiplicity of voices in the *Dunciad*s is also commented on by Donald Siebert: "Layer upon layer of innuendo and contradiction are achieved both in the complicated texture of the poetry itself and in labored footnotes and commentaries – some of them real statements by actual people, some invented remarks by actual people, some of them nonsense by fictitious persons, some (probably) accurate statements by fictitious persons" (Siebert 216).

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Keener contends that "there is much to be said [...] for the serious usefulness of Scriblerus' preface despite its comical tone" and claims that Scriblerus's helpfulness is not only shown in the prefatorial essay "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" but also in those annotations in which he analyses the *Dunciad*s with respect to the precepts found in Le Bossu's *Traité du poëme épique* (1675) (Keener 36; cf. 49). Scriblerus's importance for aligning the poem with epic tradition is also noted by Paul Baines: "Not all of what Scriblerus does in the notes is riotously parodic, and his discussion of the poem's epic nature does promote *The Dunciad* as epic of its time" (Baines, *Complete Critical Guide* 147). According to these views, Scriblerus can – at least to some extent – be read as Pope's mouthpiece. Pope's contemporary Colley Cibber (the 'hero' of the four-book *Dunciad*) was of the same opinion, though he was less concerned with how Scriblerus's notes might elucidate the poem and instead argued that Pope mainly employed Scriblerus to praise himself:

> thou [Pope] art for surer Work, and wilt trust thy Fame in no Man's Hand but thy own; having cunningly commissioned thy Friend *Scriblerus*, upon almost every Line in thy *Dunciad* to pour out the Torrent of thy proper Praise and Self-admiration! (Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter* 54, original emphasis)

As James McLaverty notes, many scholars indeed understand some of Scriblerus's comments on the *Dunciad*s as authoritative: "Pope created through Scriblerus the critical voice that came to dominate mid-twentieth-century criticism of his poetry" (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 99). McLaverty himself rejects the notion of Scriblerus as a helpful guide to the poem's meaning and argues that Scriblerus's "interpretation of the poem is not Pope's and possesses only a small degree of truth" (104). In a similar vein, Valerie Rumbold maintains that – even though he is presented as a likeable and amusing character – Scriblerus's

> annotatory style [is] characterised by archaism, hyperbole and hair-splitting; self-satisfied fuss is his default setting, and he shows little capacity to put his typically pettifogging concerns into anything like a normal perspective. (Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 182)

Likewise, Seth Rudy contends that Scriblerus "does not provide the reader with a consistent guide to [the poem's] immensity" and that he is characterised by "near schizophrenia" (Rudy, "Pope, Swift, and the Poetics of Posterity" 9). Similarly, Ruben Quintero argues that "Scriblerus [...] is an insular persona, or a Swiftian obtuse speaker [...], whose discourse should always be suspect"; he is "often Pope's heartless parody of Tibbald with his hair-splitting verbal

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criticism and, at other times, a convenient vehicle for miscues and interpolations that create a morass of critical controversy" (Quintero 120; 125).

It is striking that, regardless of whether scholars argue that Scriblerus is a useful guide or an inept fool, most acknowledge that both reason *and* incompetence can to some degree be found in his notes. For instance, McLaverty (who rejects almost everything else Scriblerus says in his prefatorial "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem") agrees with him in that the *Dunciad*s describe the "removal of [Dulness's] imperial seat from the City to the polite World" (*Dunciad* 72; cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 104). The fundamental ambiguity[161] of the Scriblerus persona has been most aptly summarised by Rumbold: Scriblerus is a "hybrid figure; and although he is introduced as a vehicle for satire, the contrast between his views and those Pope regards as normative is not consistently drawn" (Rumbold in 1729 *Dunciad* 113).[162]

Even though the ambiguity of the Scriblerus persona has been noted by several critics, there is no detailed account of what exactly makes him so ambiguous in the first place and why this ambiguity matters for our interpretation of the *Dunciad*s as a whole. Moreover, the Bentley persona has received almost no critical attention.[163] And yet, two of the core issues in the *Dunciad*s – their relation to Le Bossu's *Traité du poëme épique* and the question whether Dulness actually triumphs in the end – rely on whether we follow Scriblerus's or Bentley's (or neither's) interpretation of the work. For these reasons, my aim in this chapter is two-fold: I will explain in detail by which means Pope ambiguates both Scriblerus and Bentley, and I will show that Pope strategically uses this ambiguity and the fights between his two 'annotators' in order to complicate the interpretation of the *Dunciad*s in their entirety.

161 Throughout this chapter, I will describe Scriblerus and Bentley as *ambiguous* instead of conflicted or 'mixed' characters. A 'mixed' protagonist is described as having different, even conflicting, characteristics, whereas the depiction of an ambiguous protagonist is equivocal with respect to one and the same characteristic (cf. Zirker and Potysch 3–4; 6). For instance, a mixed character would be depicted as hating children but loving animals, while an ambiguous one would be described as loving animals in one passage and as hating them in another, without any explanation of this as a form of ambivalence or change of attitude; furthermore, there would be passages in which the character's attitude towards animals remains entirely unclear.

162 Also see Howard Weinbrot's comment that Scriblerus's "notes and comments are not consistent in tone. Sometimes they are in the old Scriblerian pedantic mode; sometimes they are sensible and explanatory; and sometimes they are in Pope's own voice" (Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered* 252).

163 For an exception, see Rumbold's "Milton's Epic and Pope's Satyr Play", which discusses the differences between Scriblerus and Bentley (138–39).

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Contradictory and Ambiguous Evidence

Though the exact manner in which Pope ambiguates Bentley and Scriblerus will be outlined below, two main strategies can be distinguished: (1) presenting readers with *contradictory* evidence regarding Scriblerus's and Bentley's opinions, intelligence, insightfulness, and (in the case of Scriblerus) use of irony; and (2) providing readers with *ambiguous* information on these points.[164] In the case of contradictory evidence, one piece of information (e.g. an annotation) by itself is unambiguous with regard to the annotatorial persona's opinions, competence, and seriousness but stands in direct conflict with what we learn about this persona elsewhere in the work. In other words, various locally unambiguous passages contradict each other, thereby leading to global ambiguity. In the case of ambiguous evidence, one and the same annotation or other (para)textual element allows for different interpretations regarding Scriblerus's or Bentley's intelligence and rationality, as well as Scriblerus's use of irony. In these instances, many local ambiguities add to one another, which again leads to global ambiguity.[165]

164 Intriguingly, in their contradictoriness and evasiveness Scriblerus and Bentley are very similar to the persona of Folly in Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. In this work, Folly first "presents herself as a fool in the most literal sense of the word: a figure of fun whose pronouncements [...] certainly cannot be taken at face value" (Griffiths 104). In the second part of the *Praise of Folly*, however, she "drop[s] her playful tone to attack all those who are foolish enough to believe themselves wise" and "appears to be speaking plainly" (Griffiths 104). In the last part of Erasmus's work, eventually, it is ambiguous whether Folly's pronouncements should be read as serious or as ironical: "she praises Christian folly [...] in such exaggerated terms that it has proved impossible to determine whether her advocacy of worldly renunciation and spiritual ecstasy should be taken at face value, or whether she has reverted to the shock tactics of the early stages of her speech" (Griffiths 104). As Jane Griffiths notes, "Folly's oration thus repeatedly raises the question whether the character of a speaker has any bearing on the value of what he or she says" – a problem that readers of Scriblerus's and Bentley's notes are confronted with throughout the *Dunciad*s (Griffiths 104). It is not clear whether Pope specifically modelled his annotatorial personas on Erasmus's Folly. As of yet, Folly has mainly been read as a model for Dulness herself (cf. Emrys Jones, "Pope and Dulness" 234–38; Erskine-Hill, "The 'New World' of Pope's *Dunciad*" 818–19). Only Mack, in his biography of Pope, suggests that Scriblerus "owe[s] something to Erasmus' invention" (Mack, *Alexander Pope* 81). For Pope's admiration for Erasmus, see Chapin *passim*.

165 The difference between contradictory and ambiguous evidence can be compared to Shlomith Rimmon's concept of "singly directed" and "doubly directed" clues that both result in ambiguity. See p. 28 above.

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Ambiguous Annotators – Unequivocal Pope vs. Ambiguous Annotators – Ambiguous Pope

With respect to the *effect* that the notes signed by Bentley or Scriblerus have on the meaning of the annotated passages and the *Dunciad*s as a whole, two cases have to be distinguished from one another. In the first case, the ambiguity of Bentley and Scriblerus themselves has little to no impact on how readers interpret Pope's *own* attitude towards the annotated passage. In such instances, readers are not able to decide whether the editorial personas' explanation is serious or ironic, competent or incompetent, but it is nevertheless clear whether Pope *himself* is adopting a serious or an ironical stance towards the information provided in the annotation. In other words, despite the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley themselves, numerous annotations that are attributed to them are unambiguous in their functions, their implications for the meaning of the annotated passage, and the question whether the notes should be read as straightforward or as ironic on Pope's side. An example of this is the annotation for the lines "How Henley lay inspir'd beside a sink / And to mere mortals seem'd a Priest in drink". In his note, Scriblerus explains that "[t]his line presents us with an excellent moral, that we are never to pass judgment merely by *appearances*" (*Dunciad* 2.426n, original emphasis). It is not clear whether Scriblerus is being ironic (thereby acting as Pope's humorous mouthpiece) or serious (thereby being made the butt of Pope's joke), but it is entirely obvious that Pope himself is being ironic – making fun of Henley and insinuating that he might indeed be a drunkard.

However, and this is the second case, there are many instances in which Pope strategically uses the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley in order to ambiguate his *own* stance. In these annotations – or, as we will see, clusters of annotations and other (para)textual elements –, it is *not* clear whether the notes are to be interpreted as ironic or serious on Pope's side. These examples will be the focus of this chapter.

Thus, in the first case, the ambiguity on the inner level of communication (fictional personas talking among each other) does not give rise to any ambiguity on the outer level of communication (Pope speaking to his readers).[166] In the second case, however, the ambiguity on the inner level of communication is crucial for the ambiguity on the outer level of communication.

166 For discussions of ambiguity and irony with respect to different levels of communication, see Winter-Froemel and Zirker 322–23; Bauer, "Ironie und Ambiguität" 148–51; and Reboul *passim*.

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Strategically Using Scriblerus's and Bentley's Ambiguity

In cases in which it is not clear whether Pope himself is being ironical or serious in a note that he attributes to Bentley and/or Scriblerus, the fact that these two personas are ambiguous is of outmost importance. If Scriblerus and Bentley were *always* unequivocally employed as Pope's mouthpieces or *always* unequivocally as the butts of his jokes, the attribution of a note to them would disambiguate it. In this case, readers could, for example, say 'It is not clear whether we should accept the interpretation proposed in this note, but since it is signed by Scriblerus and since Scriblerus is always wrong, we can conclude that this interpretation must be wrong as well.' As we will see, things are much more complicated in the *Dunciad*s. Since Scriblerus and Bentley are themselves ambiguous, the attribution of an equivocal note to them does not resolve the ambiguity of this note. In fact, the attribution rather increases it: due to the contradictory and ambiguous information that readers receive about Scriblerus's and Bentley's attitudes, competence, and seriousness throughout the *Dunciad*s, they grow alert to the question whether or not one should assume that the opinions that these two express are shared by Pope. The presence of Bentley and Scriblerus is a warning sign that a note *may* be ironical or deliberately incorrect on Pope's side, but it is far from being a confirmation that this is indeed the case.

The overall ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley is exploited in several highly intricate instances. In these annotations, Scriblerus and Bentley fight over the interpretation of a passage (or the *Dunciad*s as a whole), and it is not clear who (if either) of them can be seen as expressing Pope's own opinion.[167]

167 What makes their fights about the correct interpretations even more intricate is that Scriblerus (at least until 1742) could at some points be seen as an alter ego or a parody of the real-life Richard Bentley. For example, both allegedly prefer unknown and 'dark' authors to canonical ones (cf. *Dunciad* 4.6n; 4.225–28). The similarities between the fictional Scriblerus and the actual Bentley have also been noted elsewhere: Henry Power contends that even though the "various critics at work on that poem – Theobald, Scriblerus, and Bentley himself – each have distinct characteristics", all of their annotations are "recognisably Bentleian in approach" (Power 760n42). Likewise, Kristine Haugen argues that Scriblerus's "abrupt prose style and his habitual critical moves [...] evoke[d] Bentley" (Haugen 158). With respect to the fictional Scriblerus and Bentley personas, however, Rumbold contends that they have to be clearly distinguished: even though Scriblerus might initially have been intended to target the real Bentley, there is actually a great difference in tone between the notes attributed to these two 'editors': "Scriblerus treats both readers and fellow-commentators with the courtesy due to fellow-members of the republic of letters", while Bentley's contributions are "markedly aggressive and self-consciously professional" (Rumbold, "Milton's Epic and Pope's Satyr Play" 138–39). In a letter to Jacob Tonson, Sr., Pope describes Scriblerus as the ancestor of the real-life Bentley and Theobald: "Tibbalds will be the Follower of Bentley, & Bentley of Scriblerus"

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The two disagreements between Scriblerus and Bentley that have the greatest impact on our interpretation of the *Dunciad*s in their entirety will be at the centre of this chapter. These are concerned with (1) the question whether the poem was composed, and can be interpreted, according to the principles laid down in René Le Bossu's *Traité du poëme épique*; and (2) the question whether Tibbald's/Cibber's vision of Dulness's eventual triumph is meant to be read as a pessimistic representation of reality or as a playfully exaggerated worst-case scenario that is by no means supposed to faithfully represent the actual state of culture, politics, and leaning in Pope's time.[168]

Though the fights between Scriblerus and Bentley were only included more than a decade after the first publication of the *Dunciad*s, the presence of Scriblerus alone from 1729 onwards served to raise doubts about the interpretation of the work almost from the very start. The introduction of Bentley in 1742, then, emphasised and further complicated the questions raised by Scriblerus's notes.

Pope uses annotatorial personas to ambiguate, seemingly disambiguate, and re-ambiguate the *Dunciad*s throughout their many different versions. These uses of ambiguity raise questions about the genre of the *Dunciad*s (are they comic epics or a mock-epics?),[169] about their relationship to seventeenth-century theories of epic poetry (do they follow or mock Le Bossu?), about the danger posed by the dunces (are they harmless fools or harbingers of doom?), about the reality of Dulness's triumph (has it already taken place or is it merely a chimaera?), and, as a consequence, about the nature of Pope's satire (is it a light-hearted work aimed at laughable aesthetic shortcomings or a serious work condemning dangerous moral failings?). Underlying to all of these, however, is the question how exactly Pope ambiguates his 'annotators' Scriblerus and Bentley in the first place.

(Pope, *Corr*. 3: 243). This might suggest that Pope indeed primarily saw Scriblerus as an inept commentator and as the butt of his jokes. However, as will be shown in this chapter, the many reasonable and witty contributions by Scriblerus to the *Dunciad*s complicate this view again.

168 Other 'controversies' between Scriblerus and Bentley are: (3) the question why Tibbald/Cibber is described as "supperless" (1729 *Dunciad* 1.109n; *Dunciad* 1.115n); (4) the question whether the speaker at the beginning of the fourth book is a follower or an enemy of Dulness (*Dunciad* 4.4n); and (5) the correct reading of the passage at 4.181–82. This fifth 'fight' between the two annotatorial personas is the only one to be found as early as in the 1742 *Dunciad*; all other controversies between Scriblerus and Bentley were introduced in the 1743 version.

169 For this distinction, see p. 175 below.

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2.3.1 *Ambiguating Scriblerus*

2.3.1.1 Ambiguating Scriblerus in the *Peri Bathous* and *The Memoirs*

One of the factors contributing to the ambiguity of Scriblerus is that the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* was neither the first nor the last work in which contemporary readers encountered this persona and that in these other works Scriblerus is highly ambiguous as well. The idea of Scriblerus was first conceived during the meetings of the Scriblerus Club (consisting of Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, and Parnell) which took place in the spring and summer of 1714 (cf. Kerby-Miller 29; Rumbold, "Scriblerus Club" n.pag.).[170]

Scriblerus in the Peri Bathous

The first time that readers encountered Scriblerus was fourteen years after the persona had been created. It was in March 1728 (one year before the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum*) that Pope's *ΠΕΡΙ ΒΑΘΟΥΣ, or, Martinus Scriblerus His Treatise of the Art of Sinking in Poetry* was published. In the course of this treatise, Scriblerus appears in three different roles. Firstly, there are passages in which it is almost impossible to read Scriblerus as anything but a clever, ironic satirist, e.g. when he remarks that a true master of the bathos must "turn his Head from all the Ideas, Ways, and Workings of that pestilent Foe to it […], which is known by the Name of *Common Sense*" (Pope, *Art of Sinking in Poetry* 17, original emphasis). Secondly, however, there are many instances in which it remains ambiguous whether Scriblerus should be read as ironic and clever or as serious and stupid. Examples of this include his repeated pledges of allegiance to the bathetic Moderns (e.g. "we have now an *unquestionable Majority* on our side" 7, original emphasis) and statements like the following:

170 Though he did not publish any work related to the Scriblerus Club, Lord Oxford can also be seen as a member because he supported his literary friends in their endeavour and was present at many of their meetings (cf. Kerby-Miller 26–28; 59).

It has often been suggested that the ideas that later informed the Scriblerus Club had already been sketched two years earlier in a letter to the *Spectator* (no. 457, 14 Aug. 1712), which was possibly written by Pope (cf. Kerby-Miller 14–15). In the letter, the author promises to "[p]ublish every Month, *An Account of the Works of the Unlearned*", including "Pieces as appear […] under the Names of those Gentlemen who Compliment one another […] by the Title of the *Learned Gentlemen*" as well as extracts from "Party-Authors" and "Editors, Commentators, and others, who are often Men of no Learning, or, what is as bad, of no Knowledge" ("The kind Reception you gave my last Friday's Letter" 2, original emphasis). There is no mention of Scriblerus in this letter yet.

Kerby-Miller offers a very detailed overview of the history and output of the Scriblerus Club (cf. 1–83). For a more sceptical account, see Marshall's "The Myth of Scriblerus". She argues that Kerby-Miller and others overstate the importance of the Club for the later writings of its members and instead sees the Club only as a minor episode in each of its members' careers, going so far as to question the label "Scriblerian Satire" altogether.

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> we see the unprejudiced Minds of Children delight only in such [bathetic] Productions, and in such Images, as our true modern Writers set before them. I have observ'd how fast the general Taste is returning to this first Simplicity and Innocence; and if the Intent of all Poetry be to divert and instruct, certainly that Kind which diverts and instructs the greatest Number, is to be preferr'd. (10)

Is Scriblerus genuinely extolling 'simple' writers, or is he making fun of them? Things are made even more complicated by his third role, i.e. that of Pope's straightforward (rather than ironic, as in the first case) mouthpiece (cf. Dault 111–12). In the comparison of bad writers with different animals, for instance, Scriblerus insults Pope's enemies, wittily explaining that "*Porpoises* are unweildly [sic] and big; they put all their Numbers into a great *Turmoil* and *Tempest*, but whenever they appear in *plain* Light, [...] they are only *shapeless* and *ugly Monsters*" (Pope, *Art of Sinking in Poetry* 27, original emphasis). Here, he is unambiguously critical of contemporary 'bathetic' writers.

Throughout the *Peri Bathous*, thus, Scriblerus is both associated with the dunces and with the opposition to them, and there are cases in which it is not at all clear whether he is ironically or seriously praising them. While there are clear cases of Pope employing Scriblerus as his mouthpiece, there are also many examples in which it is questionable whether Pope expresses himself through a witty, ironic Scriblerus or whether he makes fun of a serious, stupid Scriblerus. In other words, though Pope's attitude towards the writers mentioned in the *Peri Bathous* is unequivocally negative, there are many instances in which it is ambiguous whether Scriblerus shares this attitude. But even in cases in which it is not clear whether Scriblerus's opinion concurs with Pope's, the author's own stance is obvious. The ambiguity of the Scriblerus persona hence does not ambiguate the meaning of the *Peri Bathous* as a whole. As will be shown in the course of this chapter, things lie differently in the *Dunciad*s.

Scriblerus in The Memoirs

The other major publication[171] related to Scriblerus is *The Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, published in 1741, i.e. one year before the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s and two years before

171 Minor pieces connected with Scriblerus include, for example, *Virgilius Restauratus* (published as an appendix to the *Dunciad Variorum* and most likely written by Pope's friend John Arbuthnot, see p. 49 above), *Origine of the Sciences*, and *Annus Mirabilis* (cf. Marshall, "The Myth of Scriblerus" 87). For other works related to Scriblerus (both by members of the original Scriblerus Club and later writers), see Marshall, "The Myth of Scriblerus" 87–88. Also see p. 80f. in the present volume for the great popularity that the Scriblerus persona enjoyed among satirists for the next one hundred years after the publication of the *Dunciad*s.

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the collected four-book version.[172] *The Memoirs* present Scriblerus both as a stupid dunce and as a witty, ironic satirist. Like in the *Peri Bathous*, he is "not a reliable and sustained persona" (Dault 51). For instance, in the chapter "How Martin Became a Great Critic", we learn that his greatest talent was to "convert every Trifle into a serious thing" (Pope et al. 129). At this point, it is suggested that Scriblerus should be read as the victim of the Scriblerians' satire and that he is dead-serious about all of his nonsensical propositions. Another example of Scriblerus being "the foolish pedant and the butt of the Scriblerian joke" is the chapter on the "Double Mistress", in which "the reader laughs *at* Martin" (Dault 51, original emphasis). By contrast, there are also many instances in which Scriblerus

> displays all the intelligence and perception of the Scriblerians themselves as he does in chapter eleven of *The Memoirs*, "The Case of a young Nobleman at Court, with the Doctor's Prescription for the same". In this case, the reader laughs not at Martin but *with* him. (Dault 51, original emphasis)

Apart from constantly raising questions about his intelligence, competence, and possible use of irony, *The Memoirs* also ambiguate Scriblerus's 'scholarly affiliation'. They achieve this by linking him both to old-fashioned early modern humanists *and* to contemporary, innovative textual critics. On the one hand, *The Memoirs* explain that Scriblerus's 'pedigree' includes several (real-life) humanist scholars. His maternal grandfather is either (officially) Gaspar Barthius or (probably) Petrus Scriverius, who allegedly had an affair with Barthius's mistress (cf. Pope et al. 95).[173] Earlier possible ancestors include "Albertus Magnus,

172 It is not clear how much each member of the Scriblerus Club contributed to *The Memoirs*, nor can individual chapters be attributed to a specific author (cf. Kerby-Miller 59). *The Memoirs* were first published as part of *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. II*; hence, Pope's part in the work would have been known to contemporaries (cf. Kerby-Miller 64).

173 For Gaspar Barthius's approach to xenographic annotation, see Berlincourt, *passim.* When compared to the annotations of his 'grandfather' Barthius, Scriblerus's extensive notes in the *Dunciad*s seem almost sparse and brief: Barthius's edition of Statius has 3500 pages on which "almost every line, and often every single word in a given line, is the subject of one or several notes. […] [S]ome notes are also extremely long. This partly results from exegetical strategies such as including extended lists of parallel passages and providing *in extenso* quotations. As far as thematic categories are concerned, constant attention is paid to textual criticism and clarifications of the text's literal meaning. Furthermore, linguistic, rhetorical and literary issues are frequently discussed. In contrast, mythological matters and *realia*, though not disregarded, do not occupy much space (this is also true of moral commentary). In spite of its massive length and inclusion of extensive notes on various topics, Barth's commentary on the *Thebaid* is mainly aimed at explaining and interpreting the poem" (Berlincourt 265, original emphasis).

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Paracelsus Bombastus, and the famous Scaligers", i.e. Julius Caesar Scaliger and his son Josephe Juste Scaliger (Pope et al. 95). Moreover, Scriblerus's father is called Cornelius Scriblerus – a name that closely resembles that of real-life humanist Cornelius Schrevelius, whose surname is "Latinized Dutch for scrivener" (P. Rogers, "Pope and Martial" 81). (For the *Dunciad Variorum* as a nod to Schrevelius's variorum editions, see p. 56 above). On the other hand, *The Memoirs* claim that Francis Hare's edition of Terence as well as Bentley's editions of Horace, Terence, and Milton had actually been prepared by Scriblerus, which implies his connection to contemporary textual scholarship (Pope et al. 129).[174] Hence, even though Scriblerus is made responsible for the editions of Moderns like Bentley and Hare, his name and ancestry link him with German and Dutch Renaissance scholarship in general and with the tradition of variorum editions in particular. In connecting Scriblerus to different scholarly movements, *The Memoirs* raise further questions about Scriblerus's ideological consistency, using one and the same persona to ridicule both overzealous innovation and old-fashioned pedantry.

2.3.1.2 Ambiguating Scriblerus in the *Dunciad*s

The brief overview of Scriblerus's ambiguity in the *Peri Bathous* and *The Memoirs* has, I hope, shown why readers' knowledge about these works would not have helped them unravel and disambiguate his annotatorial stance(s) in the *Dunciad*s. Quite on the contrary: Scriblerus's equivocality in these other two works could even incite readers of the *Dunciad*s to pay special attention to the contradictory opinions and varying degrees of intelligence and irony that he exhibits in this work.

Scriblerus's Contradictory Approaches to Scholarship

As in the *Peri Bathous* and *The Memoirs*, Scriblerus's literary and scholarly affiliation in the *Dunciad*s is unclear. On the one hand, his frequent (though inconsistent) use of archaic pronouns and verb inflections (e.g. "thou may'st"), his exclamation against the Moderns (cf. *Dunciad* 1.88n), and his reliance on his vast knowledge of classical literature and culture (e.g. in 1.1n; 1.12n; 1.88n; 4.27n; 4.192n; 4.484n; 4.620n) suggest that he leans towards old-fashioned Renaissance

174 The claim that both Hare's and Bentley's editions of Terence are actually Scriblerus's works is especially biting: Hare and Bentley had been friends but grew estranged and had their eventual falling out over Hare's Terence edition in 1724. In 1726, Bentley published his own edition of Terence, one of his main aims being to discredit Hare's scholarship. Bentley's annotations contain many attacks on his former friend. For more detailed information on Hare and Bentley's falling out and their Terence editions, see Kerby-Miller 270–71; Haugen 169–81; and Monk 504–12.

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scholarship. On the other hand, Scriblerus is often shown using the critical methods developed by modern innovators like Bentley and Theobald.

What is even more conspicuous is his adoption of two diametrically opposed approaches to textual editing. One is the reliance on manuscript evidence, the other the practice of conjectural emendation. The tradition of, and methods employed in, conjectural emendation as practiced by Bentley and Theobald have been described earlier (chapter 2.1.1.1). The alternative approach, i.e. the dependence on manuscripts, was promoted by Renaissance scholars such as Giovanni Lamola and Angelo Poliziano (cf. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger* 1: 27; 1: 31). They argued that the next best thing they could get to the author's own manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts by other scribes and scholars, and they followed these sources even if they contained readings that were wrong beyond doubt (cf. 1: 27). Anthony Grafton even quotes Lamola explaining that he took care to

> 'represent everything in accord with the old [manuscript] down to the smallest dot, even where it contained certain old absurdities. For I'd rather be absurd with that old manuscript than be wise with these diligent fellows'. (Lamola qtd. in Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger* 1: 31)

In Britain, this method was adopted by, among others, George Hickes, John Fell, and Thomas Hearne (cf. Harmsen, *Antiquarianism* 235). At the very end of his preface to *A Collection of Curious Discourses*, Hearne justifies this approach as follows:

> I have nothing more to say at present, but to forewarn the reader to take notice that I have all along followed the MSS. I have made use of. So that whenever there appears any Defect or Errour, whether in the Orthography or the Sentence, he must remember, that the same occurs also in the MSS. it being a Principle with me not to alter MSS. even where better and more proper Readings are very plain and obvious. For I have often known, that that hath prov'd to be the true Reading which hath been rejected. […] I would not, however, from hence have it believ'd, that I am for defending Corruptions. I am only for Fidelity. (Hearne cxxxii–cxxxiv)

In his annotation on the title of the *Dunciad*s, Scriblerus (seriously or ironically) embraces Hearne's approach to textual criticism and announces that in his spelling of the title he will

> follow the Manuscript […]; moved thereto by Authority (at all times, with Critics, equal, if not superior to Reason.) In which method of proceeding, I can never enough praise my good friend, the exact Mr. Tho. Hearne; who if any word occur, which to him and all mankind is evidently wrong, yet keeps he it in the Text with

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> due reverence, and only remarks in the Margin *sic MS*. (*Dunciad* 1.title n, original emphasis)

In his very next note just two lines later, however, Scriblerus (without commenting on his change of mind) suddenly adopts Bentley's and Theobald's method of conjectural emendation and suggest three unwarranted and preposterous changes to the beginning of Virgil's *Aeneid* (cf. 1.1–2n). In other words, he first professes to reject conjecture in favour of blindly following manuscript evidence and then immediately violates this precept. Even from the very beginning of the poem, thus, readers are alerted to the fact that Scriblerus is a highly ambiguous persona.[175] His approach to textual criticism remains a mystery throughout the *Dunciad*s: at some points he teams up with Theobald to jointly offer a conjectural emendation (cf. 2.183n; 3.36n),[176] proposes his own conjectural emendations (cf. 1.211n; 1.265n; 4.181–82n; 4.560n), and even claims that he is currently quarrelling with an author about the "*True Reading* of certain passages" in this author's works (4.43n, original emphasis). At other points, however, he severely criticises the practice of conjectural emendation (cf. 2.187n) and agrees with Hearne's disparagement of textual emendations in particular and linguistic innovation in general (cf. 3.187n).

Pope himself is, of course, ironical in these annotations (with the exception of one, see p. 153 below), and they are all designed to ridicule textual critics of either school. By targeting both those who reject commonly accepted readings to overindulge in conjectural emendation *and* those who blindly rely on manuscript evidence, Pope depicts himself as occupying the rational, unbiased ground between both extremes – which is one of the core components of his self-presentation.[177] Thus, as Simon Jarvis points out, the *Dunciad*s attack

175 There is yet another example of Scriblerus contradicting himself within the space of only a few lines: in the second book, a conjectural note is closely followed by a harsh diatribe against such conjectural alterations (cf. *Dunciad* 2.183n; 2.187n).

176 It is not entirely clear whether Theobald and Scriblerus should be seen as working together or whether Scriblerus is supposed to be read as merely reacting to a note by Theobald that could be found in a (non-existent) 'earlier' edition of the work. (On notes that 'react' to annotations that were allegedly included in fictional 'previous' editions of the *Dunciad*s, see p. 60 above). The first note (*Dunciad* 2.183n), in which Scriblerus contradicts Theobald's conjecture, points to the latter possibility; the second note (3.36n), in which Theobald asserts that the text of the poem must be wrong and in which Scriblerus then supplies the 'correct' reading, suggests the former option.

177 This goes not only for scholarly extremes but also for political ones: Hearne was a Nonjuror and Jacobite, thereby being politically closer to Pope and his friends than to the many Whig propagandists that are attacked elsewhere in the *Dunciad*s (cf. Harmsen, "Hearne, Thomas" 157). Pope thus insinuates that his satire is above party-politics and that he attacks dunces regardless of their political affiliation.

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"unreflective enlighteners and unreflective opponents of enlightenment alike"; in the annotations "[v]erbal criticism [...] is both scholastically resistant to enlightenment and unreflectingly zealous for it" (Jarvis 78; 82). This contradictory approach to textual criticism links up nicely with Scriblerus's 'mixed heritage' as both being the 'descendant' of Renaissance humanists and the alter ego of contemporary scholars (see above).

Are readers supposed to assume that Scriblerus is aware of, or rather oblivious to, the fact that he champions (and employs) two diametrically opposed scholarly approaches? Furthermore, which – if any – of these critical methods does he really embrace? Is he being ironic about his alleged adherence to one – or even both – of them? Does Scriblerus *represent* scholars like Hearne on the one hand and Theobald and Bentley on the other, or does he ironically *echo* them in order to show that he rejects their approaches?[178] There are four possibilities. Firstly, Scriblerus might not be aware of the contradiction, and he might be serious in all of his notes concerned with textual criticism, thus *representing* both sides; this would make him utterly stupid or even schizophrenic. Secondly, he might be aware of the contradictions and nevertheless be serious about all of his notes (again representing rather than ironically echoing the real-life critics); this would make him a hypocrite or at least highly ambivalent about the right approach to textual criticism. Thirdly, Scriblerus might be fully conscious of the contradictions, and he might be ironic in all of his notes; this would mean that he is Pope's humorous mouthpiece and his ally against all types of duncical textual critics. Lastly, Scriblerus might be aware of the contradictions, and he could be serious about one method and ironical about the other (thus representing one school of criticism and ironically echoing the other). In this case, however, the notes would not allow us to decide which of the methods he is really championing and which he is ridiculing. None of these four possibilities can be accepted or rejected with final certainty, and the likelihood of each possibility differs from passage to passage. Scriblerus's arguments and emendations sound indeed so absurd that one is tempted to read them as ironical, but it should be remembered that his annotations often

178 For this difference, see especially Sperber and Wilson's notion of the use-mention distinction (cf. "Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction" *passim*). Wilson elsewhere summarises this thesis as follows: "the speaker in irony does not use the proposition expressed by her utterance in order to represent a thought of her own which she wants the hearer to accept as true, but mentions it in order to represent a thought or utterance she tacitly attributes to someone else, and which she wants to suggest is ludicrously false, under-informative or irrelevant" (D. Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Verbal Irony" 1728).

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closely echo actual statements by textual critics.[179] These critics were serious – might Scriblerus be serious as well? Thus, Sperber and Wilson's main condition for irony, namely that "[t]he speaker mentions a proposition in such a way as to make clear that he rejects it as ludicrously false, inappropriate, or irrelevant", is not necessarily met here because Scriblerus faithfully imitates the phrasing of scholars who did *not* reject these propositions (Sperber and D. Wilson, "Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction" 308).

Scriblerus: Pope's Ally or Victim?

Throughout the *Dunciad*s as a whole, Scriblerus remains not only a highly ambiguous character but also an inconsistent one. This is to say that he is not always (un)ironical and (in)competent to the same degree; rather, these traits (and the extent to which they are ambiguous) vary from passage to passage. For example, in one annotation concerned with textual criticism, Scriblerus is more or less unambiguously shown as Pope's serious, straightforward mouthpiece. In this annotation, Scriblerus is depicted as

> exclaim[ing] against all such *Conjectural Emendations* in this manner: 'Let it suffice, O Pallas! that every noble Ancient, *Greek* or *Roman*, hath suffered the impertinent correction of every *Dutch, German*, and *Switz* Schoolmaster! Let our English at least escape, whose intrinsic is scarce of marble so solid, as not to be impaired or soiled by such rude and dirty hands. Suffer them to call their works their own, and after death at least to find rest and sanctuary from Critics! When these men have ceased to *rail*, let them not begin to do worse, to *comment!* Let them not conjecture into nonsense, correct out of all correctness, and restore into obscurity and confusion. Miserable fate! which can befal only the sprightliest wits that have written, and will befal them only from such dull ones as could never write!' Scribl. (*Dunciad* 2.187n, original emphasis)

Readers knew that these opinions were congruent with Pope's. He had disparaged conjectural emendations in the preface to his Shakespeare edition (see p. 53 above), and textual critics are, as we have seen, among his favourite victims in both the poem and the notes of the *Dunciad*s.[180] However, even

179 One need only compare Hearne's preface and Scriblerus's note quoted above; also see chapter 2.1.1.1 for Scriblerian notes that imitate those in Theobald's *Shakespeare Restored* almost verbatim.

180 For an attack against textual critics in the poem itself, see, for instance, this passage (omitted in the 1743 *Dunciad*): "There, thy good Scholiasts with unweary'd pains / Make Horace flat, and humble Maro's strains; / Here studious I unlucky moderns save, / Nor sleeps one error in its father's grave, / Old puns restore, lost blunders nicely seek, / And crucify poor Shakespear once a week" (1729 *Dunciad* 1.159–64). Also see Dulness's speech (in the fourth book) to all those who want to profit off dead authors, either by publishing new editions

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though Scriblerus can here very well be seen as Pope's spokesman, there is still a certain degree of irony in the note. After all, throughout the notes (and other paratexts) that are attributed to him, Scriblerus *himself* is often "conjectur[ing] into nonsense, correct[ing] out of all correctness, and restor[ing] into obscurity and confusion".[181] Does his attack against dull scholars mean that Scriblerus is ironic in all of these notes and only uses them to parody critics? Or does it mean that he is unaware of the absurdities in his annotations and believes to be exempt from his own criticism, i.e. that he is a hypocrite who sees all scholars' faults but his own? In the latter case, Pope would, paradoxically, be employing Scriblerus as his straightforward mouthpiece *and* ridicule him at the same time.

Throughout the *Dunciad*s, Scriblerus not only acts as a textual editor but also as a literary critic and explanatory annotator, offering interpretations and clarifications. Yet, these do nothing to resolve the ambiguity regarding his intelligence, self-awareness, and use of irony. First of all, there are a few statements in which he appears to serve as Pope's straightforward mouthpiece and provides helpful elucidations. The most famous of them are found in his prefatory "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem". There, he outlines the historical conditions that inspired the composition of the *Dunciad*s: the widespread adoption of the printing press, the fact that paper was cheap and printers numerous, and the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 (leading to the abolishment of

or raising monuments to them: "Thus revive the Wits! / But murder first, and mince them all to bits; / As erst Medea (cruel, so to save!) / A new Edition of old Aeson gave. / Let standard-Authors, thus, like trophies born, / Appear more glorious as more hack'd and torn, / And you, my Critics! in the checquer'd shade, / Admire new light thro' holes yourselves have made. / Leave not a foot of verse, a foot of stone, / A Page, a Grave, that they can call their own; / But spread, my sons, your glory thin or thick, / On passive paper, or on solid brick" (*Dunciad* 4.119–30).

Furthermore, though this would not have been known to contemporary readers, Pope sent his publisher Tonson a letter begging him not to let "the Tibbalds ever publish notes upon such things of mine, as are your Property yet, or shall be hereafter" (Pope, *Corr.* 3: 244; cf. also 4: 338). Both his self-annotations and his later collaboration with Warburton can be seen as an attempt to avoid being edited and annotated by duncical critics.

181 For those few readers who had access to Pope's manuscripts of the *Dunciad*s, there would even have been a second layer of irony. As Valerie Rumbold points out in her note on the passage, the suggested emendation that Scriblerus protests against ("well p–st day" instead of "high-wrought day") is indeed a variant in the drafts (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.187n; Mack, *Last and Greatest Art* 141). Thus, even though Scriblerus's diatribe against conjectural emendation echoes Pope's own opinions, it is inappropriate and unjust in this specific passage because this emendation is not conjectural but suggested by manuscript evidence. This 'inside joke' would substantiate the second possibility outlined above, i.e. that Scriblerus, despite being used as his mouthpiece, is also being ridiculed by Pope in this note.

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pre-publication censorship of all writings except for theatrical performances) caused "a deluge of Authors" to cover the land, who – with the help of unprincipled booksellers – published "slanders unpunished" (*Dunciad* 70–71). More importantly, Scriblerus's prefatory essay explains that the *Dunciad*s imitate the *Aeneid* by describing the "removal of [Dulness's] imperial seat from the City to the polite World" (*Dunciad* 72). In other words, while the *Aeneid* describes the transferral of Trojan culture to Italy, the *Dunciad*s depicts how the values of duncical hacks and upstart merchants – unprincipled profit-orientedness and opportunism as well as questionable taste, scholarship, and morals – find their way into universities, theatres, pulpits, and the royal court itself. This summary of the *Dunciad*s enjoys widespread acceptance among scholars; even McLaverty, who is highly sceptical of Scriblerus's other arguments, agrees with this interpretation (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 104). Here, Scriblerus contributes something unambiguously sensible to the *Dunciad*s. The other notes in which he can be seen as Pope's straightforward and serious spokesman are less weighty but nevertheless helpful. At the beginning of the 'pissing contest', for instance, he explains the transgressions for which the contestants (Thomas Osborne and Edmund Curll) and their prize (Eliza Haywood) are ridiculed. This is useful as their wrongdoings – in contrast to the other vices ridiculed in the second book – do not at all become clear from the poem itself:

> In this game is exposed, in the most contemptuous manner, the profligate licentiousness of those shameless scriblers [sic] (for the most part of that Sex, which ought least to be capable of such malice or impudence) who in libellous Memoirs and Novels, reveal the faults or misfortunes of both sexes, to the ruin of public fame, or disturbance of private happiness. – Scribl. (*Dunciad* 2.157n)[182]

Scriblerus once more expresses what we can assume to be Pope's opinion. There is no reason to believe that this direct attack against Pope's enemies should be ridiculed or seen as ironic. The same goes for the note in which Scriblerus explains that readers can discover examples of tasteless and incompatible images in "*Eusden*'s whole works, if to be found", thereby both mocking Eusden's literary incompetence and the ephemerality of his works (*Dunciad* 1.73n, original emphasis).[183] Nevertheless, not even those direct

182 A similar note attributed to Scriblerus, in which the moral of the passage is convincingly (though ponderously) explicated, can be found in *Dunciad* 2.213n.

183 Another example of Scriblerus straightforwardly ridiculing Pope's enemies occurs in the note in which Scriblerus refers to Elkanah Settle's insistence that he rivalled Dryden's talent and to later dunces' agreement with Settle's assessment of his own poetical powers. Scriblerus comments: "These are comfortable opinions! and no wonder some authors indulge them" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.16n). Yet another note of this kind can be found in the

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attacks against the dunces can count as an unmistakable sign of Scriblerus's intelligence. After all, the *Dunciad*s repeatedly stress that the dunces are very fond of "railing at each other" and that the collective of bad writers is "a body, of which no two members ever agreed" (*Dunciad* 31; 2.140n).[184] In other words, Scriblerus can ridicule the dunces but still be one of them. In the fourth book, however, there are a handful of further hints that Scriblerus might at least sometimes be sensible. There, he provides a few helpful and reasonable disambiguations of words (cf. *Dunciad* 4.61n; 4.93n; 4.128n; 4.247n). None of these notes are particularly witty (one might suspect that they were mainly composed by Warburton), nor does the disambiguation of the terms have any far-reaching consequences for the meaning of the passages in which they appear. But these notes are still important in showing Scriblerus as an intelligent, insightful commentator, who, at least in these instances, provides explanations that can be taken at face value.[185]

Many of Scriblerus's notes (and passages in his other paratexts), however, do not fall under this category. On the contrary – just like his textual notes discussed above – his explanations and interpretations often make readers wonder whether Scriblerus is being serious and stupid or, rather, ironical and

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second book, where Scriblerus first protests that he would never call John Dennis "a *toothless lion* or an *old serpent*" and instead proceeds to hurl Latin insults at him – allegedly to make sure that his "words [are] not to the vulgar intelligible" (*Dunciad* 2.142n, original emphasis). Rumbold argues that this might be an allusion to Bentley, who likewise showered other scholars with Latin swear words (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.142n). Furthermore, in an annotation appended to 1.88, Scriblerus openly ridicules Edmund Curll and the publisher of a pirated edition of the 1728 *Dunciad*, both of whom had suggested that the expression in this line must read "gold chains" instead of "glad chains" (cf. also editor's n for 1728 *Dunciad* 1.75–76). In a note on 4.20 Scriblerus even goes so far as to more or less directly insult George II.

184 An example of this is the enmity between Lewis Theobald and John Dennis. The annotations in the *Dunciad*s quote Dennis calling Theobald a "notorious Idiot" (*Dunciad* 1.286n), and Theobald, in turn, claiming that Dennis provokes "laughter and contempt" on a daily basis (*Dunciad* 1.106n). Similarly, Renaissance and Augustan textual critics seem to have been very fond of insulting each other. The critic Cornelio Vitelli, for instance, once called his opponent Giorgio Merula "Merdula" (cf. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger* 1: 19). Poliziano, J. J. Scaliger, and – of course – Bentley seem to have been among the most abusive scholars (cf. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger* 1: 22; 42; Gaisser, *Catullus and his Renaissance Readers* 182; Haugen 11). In comparison to these real critics, Scriblerus's and Bentley's tone in the *Dunciad*s is almost tame.

185 Further evidence for Scriblerus's wit and insightfulness can be found in the "Testimonies of Authors". There, he seems to be self-aware and self-ironic, admitting that if he sometimes relates information of little concern to both reader and author, he entreats them "to consider how minutely all true criticks and commentators are wont to insist upon such, and how material they seem to themselves, if to none other" (*Dunciad* 43–44).

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clever. For instance, in his prefatory "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", he claims that since Pope's satire is called an epic, it is subject to "severe indispensable rules" and has to be written in "strict imitation of the Ancients; insomuch that any deviation, accompanied with whatever poetic beauties, hath always been censured by the sound Critic" (*Dunciad* 74). It is clear that Pope is being ironic here, but what about Scriblerus, who had proposed a completely reasonable and insightful interpretation of the whole poem only a few pages earlier? Has he lost his mind within just a few paragraphs, or is he being facetious? The same ambiguity regarding Scriblerus's seriousness also arises from his note on the description of a "fierce Logician" riding on "German Crouzaz, and Dutch Burgersdyck" (the first a detractor of Pope's *Essay on Man*, the second a Renaissance scholar), in which he wonders:

> There seems to be an improbability that the Doctors and Heads of Houses should ride on horseback, who of late days, being gouty or unweildy [sic], have kept their coaches. But these are horses of great strength, and fit to carry any weight, as their German and Dutch extraction may manifest; and very famous we may conclude, being honour'd with *Names*, as were the horses Pegasus and Bucephalus. Scribl. (*Dunciad* 4.198, original emphasis)[186]

Are readers supposed to interpret this as a witty remark by Scriblerus who simply continues and escalates the metaphor or as a ridiculous misunderstanding on his part? The way in which other (unsigned) annotations react to Scriblerus does not help to clear up the mysteries surrounding his possible fondness for irony. In one note, an unnamed editor persona asserts that Scriblerus is using "affected ignorance", thus insinuating that he is indeed being ironical (*Dunciad* 2.314n). In another, it is claimed that Scriblerus is to be "understood allegorically", again implying that he should not be read as someone who expects that his absurd statements will be taken at face value (*Dunciad* 1.203n). By contrast, two other unsigned annotations openly mock him for misinterpreting the poem (cf. *Dunciad* 4.30n; 4.553n). (The annotations in which Bentley criticises and ridicules Scriblerus will be discussed below.) But since the *Dunciad*s are the *Dunciad*s, we cannot even be sure that the notes which react to Scriblerus's annotations can be taken seriously.

In *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment*, Kristine Haugen aptly describes Scriblerus as an "all-purpose pedant" (Haugen 157). But as this chapter has shown, it is just as possible to see him as an ironical all-purpose prankster instead. To sum up the discussion, there are six main reasons why is it

186 For other notes in which Scriblerus can either be read as serious (and plain stupid) or as ironical (and intelligent), see *Dunciad* 2.50n; 2.126n; 4.148n.

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impossible to give a universally valid and conclusive verdict on Scriblerus's opinions, intelligence, self-awareness, and use of irony: (1) we receive contradictory pieces of information regarding his scholarly affiliations, none of which can be decisively accepted or rejected; (2) in some cases in which he presents an argument that can definitely be seen as ironic on Pope's side, he is closely echoing someone who meant this statement seriously, suggesting that he might be serious as well; (3) there are several annotations and passages in his other paratexts in which Scriblerus indeed acts as Pope's mouthpiece and says something reasonable, thereby suggesting that he can by no means be seen as *wholly* incompetent; (4) there are many annotations in which it is ambiguous whether Scriblerus should be read as serious and stupid or as ironical and intelligent; (5) the unsigned notes in the *Dunciad*s that react to him sometimes portray him as witty and ironic, sometimes as serious and inept; and (6) similar ambiguities appear throughout the two other major Scriblerian works which thus do not 'stabilise' and disambiguate his character but rather add to his ambiguity. What is important to keep in mind is that the equivocality regarding Scriblerus's intellectual capacities and use of irony is not consistent throughout the *Dunciad*s. Rather, there are some passages in which he seems to be unambiguously stupid, some in which he appears to be unambiguously clever, and many others in which he can be read as both.

As stated above, in most annotations and other paratexts attributed to Scriblerus, it is clear which stance Pope adopts to the arguments brought forward by his annotatorial persona. Whenever this is not the case, however, Scriblerus's overall equivocality emphasises and intensifies the ambiguity surrounding Pope's irony or seriousness in this passage. Furthermore, as we will see, Pope strategically pits Scriblerus against the likewise ambiguous Bentley, thereby complicating the interpretation of the *Dunciad*s as a whole.

2.3.2 *Ambiguating Bentley*

When readers opened the separately-published fourth book of the *Dunciad*s in 1742, they found that Scriblerus had gained an annotatorial colleague: Bentley. In this 1742 version, however, Bentley's notes are neither numerous nor do they have any far-reaching consequences for the interpretation of the *Dunciad*s as a whole. This changes in the 1743 four-book *Dunciad.* There, the number and, as we will see, impact of Bentley's annotations increase,[187] and Scriblerus's prefatory "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" is now followed by Bentley's "Ricardus

187 In the 1743 *Dunciad,* several annotations signed by Bentley are added to the first three books, which had originally been published more than a decade earlier.

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Aristarchus of the Hero of the Poem".[188] In this essay, Bentley/Aristarchus argues that Tibbald was never the true hero of the *Dunciad*s and that, instead, Poet Laureate Colley Cibber must be accepted as king of the dunces. Pope's recent decision to replace the protagonist of his poem is thus portrayed as the 'discovery' of the poem's real hero and as the correction of a decade-old misunderstanding. In his essay, Bentley names a great number of reasons why Cibber is a much more suitable protagonist than Tibbald, underpinning his arguments with quotes from Cibber's *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian* (1740) as well as from Cibber's *A Letter from Mr. Cibber, To Mr. Pope* (1742). Bentley even argues that Cibber himself recognised his important role when reading the 1742 addition to the *Dunciad*s: "no sooner had the fourth book laid open the high and swelling scene, but he recognized his own heroic Acts" (*Dunciad* 82). This argument is reiterated in Bentley's annotation on the title of the poem, in which he brings forward further supporting evidence for Cibber being the true hero of the satire. First of all, he repeats Pope's ruse that the first edition of the *Dunciad*s "was not published by the Author himself. It was printed originally in a foreign Country [Ireland]. And what foreign Country? Why, one notorious for blunders" (*Dunciad* 1.title n).[189] He goes on to explain that the man "who brings / The Smithfield Muses to the ear of Kings" must be the Poet Laureate (somehow neglecting that the first version of the *Dunciad*s was published before Cibber succeeded to this office) (*Dunciad* 1.title n). Furthermore, he explains that the reference to the "Patricians" (1728 & 1729 *Dunciad*s) or the "Great" (1743 *Dunciad*) in the third line of the poem clearly shows that Tibbald could not be the hero because he, unlike Cibber, "was never an Author in fashion, or caressed by the Great" (*Dunciad* 1.title n). Lastly, according to Bentley, the line "Still Dunce the second

188 Richard is the first name of real-life scholar Bentley and Aristarchus the name under which Bentley appears in the verse part of the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s (4.203–74). The name Aristarchus "is taken from a Greek scholar who was head of the Alexandrian Library in the middle of the second century B.C. He is regarded as one of the founders of textual scholarship, especially in his work on Homer" (P. Rogers, *Pope Encyclopedia* 11). As Rumbold points out, the prefatory essay ascribed to Ricardus Aristarchus was composed by Warburton, not by Pope (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 75).

189 In the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum*, the "Advertisement" announced that the present edition was "*a much more correct and compleat copy of the* DUNCIAD" than the 1728 version (1729 *Dunciad* 122, original emphasis and capitalisation). Likewise, the "Letter to the Publisher" in 1729 congratulated the publisher on having "procured a correct Edition of the DUNCIAD, which the many surreptitious ones have rendered so necessary; and it is yet with more, that I am informed it will be attended with a COMMENTARY: a work so necessary, that I cannot think the Author himself would have omitted it, had he approv'd of the first appearance of this Poem" (1729 *Dunciad* 127, original capitalisation).

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reign'd like Dunce the first" (which is annotated as a reference to Dryden but implicitly alludes to George I and II) obviously points to Cibber, who had a son "exactly like him, in his poetical, theatrical, political, and moral Capacities" (*Dunciad* 1.title n). Bentley's argument in his prefatory essay and in his annotation on the very beginning of the poem thus rely on taking at face value Pope's (more or less transparent) fabrications concerning the publishing history of the *Dunciad*s and on misinterpreting (or at least ambiguating) the poem.

(*In*)*Correct Bentley*

Bentley's prefatory essay and his annotation on the title highlight the central intricacy of this annotatorial persona: he is both right and wrong at the same time.[190] As far as all versions of the *Dunciad*s from 1728 to 1742 are concerned, Bentley's interpretations – both regarding the identity of the hero and the textual evidence with which he tries to support his identification – are, of course, incorrect. In the 1743 *Dunciad*, however, he is indeed right about Cibber being the protagonist, and his readings of the beginning of the poem are at least within the realm of possibility. One might say that, through the change of its hero, the poem is retrospectively ambiguated. For instance, while it made little sense to interpret "Still Dunce the second reign'd like Dunce the first" as

190 A similar strategy can be seen in Bentley's annotation on *Dunciad* 4.181–82, where he claims that a change that Pope had only recently made to the *Essay on Criticism* had always been the correct reading. Bentley writes: "This farther leads me to animadvert upon a most grievous piece of nonsense to be found in all the Editions of the Author of the Dunciad himself. A most capital one it is, and owing to the confusion above mentioned by Scriblerus, of the two words *Liberty* and *Monarchy.* Essay on Crit.: 'Nature, like *Monarchy*, is but restrain'd / By the same Laws herself at first ordain'd.' Who sees not, it should be, *Nature like* Liberty? Correct it therefore *repugnantibus omnibus* (even tho' the Author himself should oppugn) in all the impressions which have been, or shall be, made of his works. Bentl." (*Dunciad* 4.181–82, original emphasis). Just as Pope first made Tibbald the hero of the *Dunciad*s and then replaced him with Cibber, he first wrote "Monarchy" and then altered it to "Liberty" in a later edition. Bentley, however, claims that Pope had written "Liberty" from the very beginning and that all early editions were simply incorrect (regardless of what the actual author may argue).

Thus, while Bentley's note reacts to an actual textual variant in the *Essay on Criticism*, his note is phrased in such absurd terms that readers may be led to (incorrectly) believe that Bentley is being ironised by Pope and that no such variant exists. Pope here uses Bentley to draw attention to an actual change in the *Essay in Criticism* while also raising the question whether this change is really his own or whether Bentley is simply suggesting a nonsensical emendation. The note goes far beyond ridiculing the self-assurance of textual critics. Instead, Pope employs it to ironically reflect on the changed political situation of his country, on the transformation of his political beliefs, and on his (and his friends') loss of royal favour after the death of Queen Anne and the accession of the Hanoverians.

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a reference to Colley and Theophilus Cibber in 1729, the context of the 1743 *Dunciad* makes this reading not probable but at least permissible. Thus, all versions considered together, the *Dunciad*s are works in which Tibbald and Cibber both are and are *not* the protagonist, in which Bentley's interpretations both are and are *not* correct.

Bentley: Pope's Ally and Victim

This, however, is not to suggest that Bentley is always right in the 1743 *Dunciad*. Like Scriblerus, Bentley contributes both notes in which he can be seen as acting as Pope's (and Warburton's) serious mouthpiece and such in which he is being ironised by them. An annotation of the former sort appears at the beginning of the first book and provides a lengthy definition of "Dulness": The term should

> not to be taken contractedly for mere Stupidity, but in the enlarged sense of the word, for all Slowness of Apprehension, Shortness of Sight, or imperfect Sense of things. It includes […] Labour, Industry, and some degree of Activity and Boldness: a ruling principle not inert, but turning topsy-turvy the Understanding, and inducing an Anarchy or confused State of Mind. This remark ought to be carried along with the reader throughout the work; and without this caution he will be apt to mistake the Importance of many of the Characters, as well as of the Design of the Poet. Hence it is that some have complained he chuses too mean a subject, and imagined he employs himself, like Domitian, in killing flies; whereas those who have the true key will find he sports with nobler quarry, and embraces a larger compass; or (as one saith, on a like occasion) 'Will see his Work, like Jacob's ladder, rise, / Its foot in dirt, its head amid the skies.' Bentl. (*Dunciad* 1.15n)

Despite the annotation's misplaced secrecy (one does not need a "true key" in order to see that Pope is just as much attacking wealthy patrons, influential scholars, and high-profile politicians as he is ridiculing obscure hack writers), it is helpful and further points to the expansion of the satirical scope of the *Dunciad*s in 1742 and 1743. Similar to Scriblerus, Bentley also sometimes hurls straightforward insults at the victims of Pope's satire, thus allying himself with the author. For example, when annotating a passage about a forger of gems and coins begging Dulness to "grant me still to cheat", Bentley remarks: "Some read *skill*, but that is frivolous, for Annius hath that skill already; or if he had not, *skill* were not wanting to cheat such persons [rich collectors]. Bentl." (*Dunciad* 4.355n, original emphasis).[191]

191 Two further examples of Bentley acting as Pope's and Warburton's serious (though excessively ponderous) mouthpiece are 4.554n (a note satirising flattery) and 4.610n (a note

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With regard to those of Bentley's annotations in which Pope is being ironic, there seems to be much less ambiguity with regard to Bentley's own seriousness or irony than in the case of Scriblerus's notes. As we have seen above, readers could not use evidence outside the *Dunciad*s in order to disambiguate Scriblerus's potential use of irony because in the *Peri Bathous* and *The Memoirs* he was ambiguous with respect to his irony/seriousness as well. In the case of Bentley, however, readers had access to a fairly unequivocal version of this persona outside the *Dunciad*s: they knew that the *actual* Bentley was the enemy of Pope and his friends (he was attacked, for instance, in Pope's *Sober Advice from Horace* and Swift's *Tale of a Tub*) and that he had published a universally-ridiculed edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1732. They also knew that the real-life Bentley was dead-serious when, in the preface to this edition, he asserted that the interpolations "foisted in" by the contemporary "editor" of Milton (who most likely only existed in Bentley's mind) could be detected "by their own Silliness and Unfitness; and easily cured by printing them in the *Italic* Letter, and inclosing them between two Hooks" (Bentley, *Milton* n.pag., emphasis reversed). Thus, it is likely that readers would have interpreted the following *Dunciad*s note as completely unironic on Bentley's side. When annotating the lines "Nor wert thou, Isis! wanting to the day, / [Tho' Christ-church long kept prudishly away]", which depict the universities following Dulness's call, Bentley argues that

> [t]his line is doubtless spurious, and foisted in by the impertinence of the Editor; and accordingly we have put it between Hooks. For I affirm this College came as early as any other, by its *proper Deputies*; nor did any College pay homage to Dulness in its *whole body*. Bentl. (*Dunciad* 4.194n, original emphasis)

As the real Bentley did so often in his Milton edition, the fictional Bentley here declares the second line a forgery and interpolation. To contemporaries, the fictional Bentley's reasons for affirming that Christ Church College, Oxford, was just as dull as any other college would have been clear: during the Phalaris controversy of the 1690s, the wits of Christ Church (chief among them Pope's friend Francis Atterbury) vigorously attacked the real-life Bentley's argument that the letters of Phalaris were a forgery. In 1698, they published *Dr. Bentley's Dissertation on the Epistle of Phalaris and the Fables of Aesop Examin'd*, in which they ridicule Bentley's discussion of the matter and support the view of Sir William Temple (Swift's patron and friend), who (incorrectly) argued that the letters were authentic (cf. J. M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books* 59; Walsh, "Swift's

attacking the repeated attempts of the Whigs to silence the Convocation, i.e. the "representative forum of the Anglican clergy") (editor's n for *Dunciad* 4.610n).

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Tale of a Tub and the Mock Book" 104–05). Thus, one is led to suspect that the fictional Bentley's rejection of the line owes more to selfishness than to philologically sound scholarship and any proof that the line was indeed "foisted in" by another editor. His clarification that no "College pa[id] homage to Dulness in its *whole body*" is in the same vein, suggesting that he – the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge – is exempt from the criticism of the lines.[192]

There are several other notes in which Pope and Warburton are ironical but – based on what readers knew about the actual Bentley's approach to textual criticism – in which Bentley can be seen as serious: his discussion of the "Cibberian" and the "Cerberian" foreheads (cf. *Dunciad* 1.218n), his nonsensical explanation why Pope's insults against Cibber must mean that Pope indeed intended the poem for publication (cf. 4.20n), and his outcry against the expression "nothing but a Solo" (cf. 4.324n).[193]

As opposed to Scriblerus, who is highly ambiguous with respect to his irony/seriousness, the Bentley persona can generally be read as being serious. However, as the evidence discussed above suggests, in cases in which it is not clear which stance Pope and Warburton take towards Bentley's arguments, it is unclear whether Bentley is to be read (1) as their correct and straightforward mouthpiece, (2) as correct for the 1743 *Dunciad* but as incorrect for all earlier versions of the poem, or (3) as the incorrect and stupid butt of their joke.

To conclude, throughout the *Dunciad*s it often remains ambiguous whether Pope is using Scriblerus and Bentley as his intelligent mouthpieces or as the obtuse victims of his satire. As will be shown below, there are several cases in which Pope strategically uses this ambiguity to create even more ambiguity. In these cases, the two annotatorial personas are fighting about the meaning of certain passages and, ultimately, the *Dunciad*s as a whole – without allowing readers to conclusively determine who (if either) of them can be seen as

192 As Rumbold points out, on Warburton's side the end of the note may also have served to clarify that this attack is not directed at his friends at Oxford (cf. editor's n for Pope, *Dunciad* 4.194n). Bentley's note can thus be read as both ironic (with respect to Bentley's self-defence) and as serious (with respect to Warburton's friends not being dull).

193 Bentley's argument that – given the chronology of the poem – George Thorold cannot be the Mayor alluded to in the poem, however, raises a valid point (cf. *Dunciad* 1.85–86n). As McTague notices, the information we receive about the temporal setting of the *Dunciad*s is highly contradictory: "We are told in 'The Publisher to the Reader' that the action of the poem takes place in 1719 or 1720. Yet several of the episodes in book two are based, if only allegorically and allusively, on events of a later date. Similarly, in book three, the underworld shade of the city poet Elkanah Settle 'prophesies' numerous things that have already happened either at the time of the poem's publication or its professed time of action. Nor was Settle dead in 1719/20, at which point he could still look forward to four further years of retirement in the Charterhouse" (McTague 186–87).

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expressing Pope's own opinion. In what follows, I will consider two aspects for which the 'fight' between Scriblerus and Bentley is especially consequential: (1) the question whether the *Dunciad*s follow or ridicule French critic René Le Bossu; and (2) the question whether the dunces are harmless or dangerous and whether or not Dulness eventually triumphs, i.e. whether the *Dunciad*s are primarily humorous and optimistic works or despondent, pessimistic ones.

2.3.3 *Scriblerus, Bentley, and Le Bossu's* Traité du poëme épique

Introduction: Le Bossu in "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem"

One of main points of contention between Scriblerus and Bentley revolves around Scriblerus's prefatory essay "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", in which he spends several paragraphs analysing the *Dunciad*s with reference to René Le Bossu's *Traité du poëme épique* (1675).[194] Le Bossu was the most important theorist of epic poetry in Pope's time (cf. Clark 243–46; Douglas 690; Keener 35). In his influential treatise, he defines an epic poem as a work that is

> not the *Rehearsal* of the *Action* of some one [real, historical] *Hero*, in order to form Mens Manners by his Example; but, on the contrary, a Discourse invented to form the Manners by the *Recital* of a *feign'd Action*, and describ'd at pleasure under the borrow'd Name of some Illustrious Person or other, that is made choice of, after the *Platform* of the Action, that is ascrib'd to him, is laid. (Le Bossu 1.14, original emphasis)

This definition hints at one of the main concerns of Le Bossu's treatise, namely the order in which an epic poet develops and structures the different components of the poem. According to Le Bossu, the most common[195] order is the following: in a first step, the poet considers a contemporary social, political, or cultural problem that he wants to address (cf. Le Bossu 1.8).[196] Second, the poet chooses the moral that he wants to convey in order to mitigate this problem

194 In what follows, I will quote from the 1695 English translation, *Monsieur Bossu's Treatise of the Epick Poem*. Instead of page numbers, I will provide the number of the book and the number of the chapter.

195 Le Bossu also concedes that in some cases a different order is possible. For example, the poet might first read about a real historical character who inspires him "with fine Fancies, and as exact a Moral as that which *Homer* teaches" (Le Bossu 1.14, original emphasis). In this case, what is usually step 4 (choosing the name of the hero) precedes step 2 (choosing the moral of the poem).

196 The contemporary problem addressed in Homer's *Iliad*, for example, was that the Greeks were "divided into as many States as they had Capital Cities. […] And yet these distinct States were very often oblig'd to unite together in one Body against their common Enemies" (Le Bossu 1.8).

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(cf. Le Bossu 1.7–8).[197] Third, based on this moral, the epic poet then develops the Fable, which is a "*Discourse invented to form Men's Morals by Instructions disguis'd under the Allegories of an Action*" (Le Bossu 1.3, original emphasis).[198] This means that an epic poem does not convey its moral directly but presents a narrative from which this moral can be inferred. The Fable is a brief sketch of this narrative. At this point of the composition process, the time, place, and the characters of the poem are not yet decided upon (cf. Le Bossu 1.7). It is only in the fourth step that the Fable

> must be render'd *Probable* by the Circumstances of *Times, Places*, and *Persons*; that is to say, […] we must seek for some Persons already known by *History*, or other ways, by whom we may with Probability represent the Personages of this *Fable*. *Homer* has made choice of *the Siege of Troy*, and feign'd that this Action happen'd there. He has given the Name of *Achilles* to a valiant and angry Phantom[.] (Le Bossu 1.8, original emphasis)

In a last step, the author builds the rest of the poem (also called the Action, i.e. the exact details of the plot) around this framework.[199] According to Le Bossu, the characters, places, and times in an epic poem are interchangeable (i.e. Homer could just as well have chosen the siege of Thebes instead of Troy), and, if taken from history, can also diverge from historical facts (cf. Le Bossu 1.13; 1.14). What is more, narrative poems that stick to the facts and merely retell a historical event without wanting to convey a particular moral (e.g., according to Le Bossu, Silius's *Punica*) are not regarded as epic poems by him (cf. Le Bossu 1.3). Even if they are based on actual persons and events, the characters and actions in an epic poem *have* to be "*Feign'd, Allegorical, and Universal*; not *Historical* and *Singular*" (Le Bossu 1.2, original emphasis).

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197 According to Le Bossu, the Moral that Homer strove to bring across in the *Iliad* is that "*a Misunderstanding between Princes is the Ruin of their own States*" (Le Bossu 1.8, original emphasis).

198 The Fable of the *Iliad,* for example, is the following (I am only quoting the beginning): "Several Princes, independent on one another, were united against a Common Enemy. He, whom they had Elected their *General*, offers an Affront to the most Valiant of all the Confederates. This offended Prince was so far provok'd, that he withdrew himself, and obstinately refused to fight for the Common Cause" (Le Bossu 1.8, original emphasis). One must admit that McLaverty's remark that "Le Bossu's accounts of fables look suspiciously like summaries of the poems with the names left out" is quite apt (McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 101).

199 As Keener notes, Le Bossu's treatise is a bit confusing because he sometimes uses two terms for the same concept or, conversely, one term for two different concepts. For instance, he often applies the term "General Action" to the Fable rather than to the Action of the poem (cf. Keener 37). The same problem also occurs in Scriblerus's prefatory essay, which frequently refers to the Fable as the "Action" (cf. *Dunciad* 71–72).

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According to Scriblerus's "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", the *Dunciad*s are composed in accordance with these precepts. However, Scriblerus's explication of the *Dunciad*s does not follow Le Bossu's steps one by one, and he often does not always use the terms (Fable, Action, etc.) employed by Le Bossu. The contemporary problem addressed in the *Dunciad*s is that "Paper […] became so cheap, and Printers so numerous, that a deluge of Authors covered the land" and that, after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, low-life hack writers could "publish slanders unpunished" (*Dunciad* 70–71). As Keener points out, the moral that the *Dunciad*s are meant to convey is never clearly stated (cf. Keener 44).[200] In a next step, Scriblerus seems to propose two interconnected Fables: first, the poet "feigns" that the Goddesses of Dulness and Poverty had "taken up [their] abode" with one another and "that they jointly inspired all such writers and such works", i.e. untalented hacks who publish libellous writings (*Dunciad* 71). Second, the Fable is concerned with "the restoration of the reign of Chaos and Night, by the ministry of Dulness their daughter, in the removal of her imperial seat from the City to the polite World" (*Dunciad* 72). After having decided on the Fable, a protagonist "must be fix'd upon to support this action, who […] must be such an one as is capable of being all three" kinds of dunces, i.e. someone who unites all "Party writers, dull poets, and wild criticks" in one person (1729 *Dunciad* 165).[201] Scriblerus goes on to explain that

> [t]his *phantom* in the poet's mind, must have a *name:* He seeks for one who hath been concerned in the *Journals*, written bad *Plays* or *Poems*, and published low *Criticisms*: He finds his name to be *Tibbald*, and he becomes of course the Hero of the poem. (1729 *Dunciad* 165–66, original emphasis)

Scriblerus ends this part of his prefatory essay by explaining how the different episodes of the poem are conducive to its Action (cf. *Dunciad* 72–73).

Critics have been very divided about the question whether this passage of "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" is meant to ridicule Le Bossu or to draw readers' attention to how closely Pope is following his precepts. Frederick Keener and Ulrich Broich contend that "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" in this case indeed presents a valid and serious interpretation of the *Dunciad*s. For Broich, Scriblerus's prefatory piece shows that Pope saw his satire as a "genuine epic

200 For lack of a moral, one might refer to what Scriblerus calls the "truth" of the poem, which is that "the Causes creative of such Authors" are "*Dulness* and *Poverty*; the one born with them, the other contracted by neglect of their proper talents, through self-conceit of greater abilities" (*Dunciad* 71, original emphasis).

201 I am quoting this part of "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" from the 1729 *Dunciad* because, unlike the corresponding passage in the 1743 *Dunciad*, it clearly outlines the alleged 'thought process' behind choosing Tibbald as the hero.

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in the tradition of the lost comic epic *Margites*" (Broich 63). Keener stresses the political implications of Pope's use of Le Bossu: the French critic argued that the moral of an epic is (at least partly) always addressed to the current ruler and that the epic hero always to some extent represents this ruler (cf. Keener 40). According to Keener, Pope thus uses the references to Le Bossu in order to drive home the point that, even though the hero of the *Dunciad*s may be named Tibbald or Cibber/Bays (or Dulness herself), he (or she) could actually "stand for no one but the second George" (Keener 53). In these views, Scriblerus acts as Pope's serious spokesman. By contrast, James McLaverty and A. F. B. Clark contend that this section of "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" is by no means to be taken seriously. Clark calls Pope the "first English writer to ridicule Le Bossu by burlesque applications of his critical scheme", especially in the apparatus of the *Dunciad*s (Clark 247). McLaverty likewise argues that Pope's stance toward Le Bossu in the *Dunciad*s is parodic (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 99). What is it that gives rise to these diverging assessments and what consequences does this have for a global interpretation of the *Dunciad*s?

Pope's Unclear Attitude Towards Le Bossu Outside the Dunciad*s*

As argued above, in many of Scriblerus's notes throughout the *Dunciad*s Pope's own stance towards the matter at hand (though not towards the annotatorial persona) is quite obvious, and readers can easily infer whether the author himself is being serious or ironic. However, things lie differently in this case. Throughout his career, Pope had expressed contrasting (and sometimes also ambiguous) views on Le Bossu. Thus, readers could not rely on their knowledge of Pope's other works in order to decide whether he was using Scriblerus in order to praise or to ridicule the French critic.[202]

On the one hand, Le Bossu was indeed *the* foremost authority on epic poetry in Pope's age, and Pope himself praises him in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* translations. In the preface to his *Iliad*, he advises all future translators to read "*Bossu's* admirable Treatise of the Epic Poem" because it gives them "the justest Notion of [Homer's] Design and Conduct" (Pope, *Iliad* 23, original emphasis). Furthermore, throughout the notes in the *Odyssey* translation, Le Bossu is referred to in positive terms, and the translation is even preceded by a lengthy extract from Le Bossu's treatise, titled "A General View of the Epic Poem and of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*". However, McLaverty contends that this extract,

202 One can compare this to one of the strategies by which Pope makes it difficult to determine his attitude towards Scriblerus, i.e. by relying on readers' knowledge of other works in which his stance toward Scriblerus is likewise unclear (see above, chapter 2.3.1.1).

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though an "act of deference", would have been much more unequivocally positive if Pope had incorporated Le Bossu's precepts into his own approach to the epic instead of just quoting him without any further comment (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 100). Yet, this argument does not seem entirely convincing because it seems improbable that Pope, who had no scruples about attacking other eminent critics in his translations, would have praised Le Bossu against his own convictions.

On the other hand, Pope's "Receit [sic] to Make an *Epick* Poem" – first published in the *Guardian* (no. 78, 10 June 1713) and later remodelled into the fifteenth chapter of the *Peri Bathous* – "has some fun at Le Bossu's expense in its structure and general stance, and particularly in its treatment of the hero" (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 100). Here, Pope explains that critics have laid down "many mechanical Rules for Compositions of this Sort" and gives advice on how to create the Fable, the Episodes, the Moral and Allegory, etc. (Pope, *Art of Sinking in Poetry* 80). The "Receit" also advises poets that, after having sketched the plot, they should "take a Hero whom you may chuse for the Sound of his Name, and put him into the midst of these Adventures" (81). This is a rather direct jibe at Le Bossu's claim that the protagonist of an epic poem is decided upon only late in the composition process and that the names of epic heroes are more or less interchangeable. Nevertheless, McLaverty seems to overstate the degree to which the "Receit" and the respective chapter in the *Peri Bathous* poke fun at Le Bossu. As Loyd Douglas convincingly shows in his detailed comparison between the "Receit" and Richard Blackmore's poems as well as Blackmore's preface to *King Arthur*, the main victim of Pope's brief 'manual' is not Le Bossu but Blackmore (who would later also be ridiculed in the *Dunciad*s) (cf. Douglas 694–99). What is more, Loyd points out that the "Receit" even attacks those who *fail* to follow Le Bossu's principles: Pope's ironic advice on how to create the Moral and the Allegory is to "extract [them] out of the fable afterwards at your leisure" – a method that is directly opposed to Le Bossu's emphasis on the Moral being the very basis of the Fable (Pope, *Art of Sinking* 82; cf. Douglas 700). Thus, the "Receit" cannot really be seen as a parody of Le Bossu's treatise; at the very most, it contains a few instances of good-natured humour at his expense. To conclude, what readers of the *Dunciad*s could infer from Pope's other works is that he indeed seems to have admired Le Bossu but that he also may have had some reservations about the critic's approach to the epic hero – the very aspect that Scriblerus's discussion puts most emphasis on. As a consequence, external evidence does not help readers ascertain whether Pope uses Scriblerus's prefatory essay in order to show his general allegiance to Le Bossu or to highlight his critical stance towards Le Bossu's notion of the epic hero.

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Le Bossu in the 1729 Dunciad Variorum

In the paratexts of the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* itself, we find evidence both for and against the assumption that Scriblerus is acting as Pope's serious mouthpiece when stressing how closely the poem follows Le Bossu's principles, especially in its choice of the hero. To start off with the supporting evidence, the "Preface Prefixed to the Five First Imperfect Editions of the *DUNCIAD*" (first printed in the 1728 *Dunciad* and then reprinted with notes as Appendix I from 1729 onwards), which is *not* signed by Scriblerus, argues that

> [t]here may arise some obscurity in chronology from the *Names* in the poem, by the inevitable removal of some authors, and insertion of others, in their niches. For whoever will consider the unity of the whole design, will be sensible, that the *poem was not made for these authors, but these authors for the poem*. I should judge that they were clapp'd in as they rose, fresh and fresh, and chang'd from day to day; in like manner as when the old boughs wither, we thrust new ones into a chimney.
> [...]
> [W]e judg'd it better to preserve them as they are, than to change them for fictitious names; by which the satire would only be multiplied, and applied to many instead of one. Had the hero, for instance, been called Codrus, how many would have affirm'd him to have been Mr. T. Mr. E. Sir R. B. *etc*. but now all that unjust scandal is saved by calling him by a name, which by good luck happens to be that of a real person. (*Dunciad* 367, original emphasis)

In this passage, the apparent interchangeability of the characters of the *Dunciad*s (which is so central to Le Bossu's approach) is confirmed. Even before the 1743 substitution of Cibber for Tibbald, there had been several instances in which one dunce had indeed taken the place of another in a later edition of the poem. But then again, the passage just quoted cannot be completely taken at face value, given that the whole "Preface" is, as its annotations repeatedly tell us, "almost a continued irony" (*Dunciad* 364). More convincing evidence (though only few readers would have known this) is that the early drafts of the *Dunciad*s had indeed been finished before Lewis Theobald was finally chosen as the hero of the poem. The affront for which Theobald was turned into the king of the dunces, i.e. his *Shakespeare Restored*, "did not appear until March 1726, but Pope seems to have completed a poem on Dulness by October 1725" (McLaverty, "Pope and Giles Jacob's *Lives of the Poets*" 23; cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" xiii). Thus, even though Le Bossu's idea to first finish a sketch of the plot and then to choose the hero seems rather outlandish, it aptly describes the genesis of the *Dunciad*s.

All passages that call into question whether Scriblerus expresses Pope's own opinion when arguing that the *Dunciad*s follow Le Bossu's principles are,

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surprisingly (or maybe rather unsurprisingly), uttered by Scriblerus himself. For instance, right after having explained that the poet randomly "assign[ed] to each [dunce] some *proper name* or other, such as he could find", Scriblerus contradicts himself and affirms that

> the public hath already acknowledged how justly [the characters] are drawn: The manners are so depicted, and the sentiments so peculiar to those to whom applied, that surely to transfer them to any other or wiser personages, would be exceeding difficult[.] (*Dunciad* 73, original emphasis)

The supposed interchangeability of the characters in an epic poem (emphasised by Scriblerus slightly earlier) is here argued to be impossible. Scriblerus could be too obtuse to realise his contradiction (which would suggest that he serves as the butt of Pope's joke), or he could use this contradiction in order to show that he is being ironic about one of these premises, without making clear which one this is. In either case, the presence of two contradicting pieces of information – both uttered by the same ambiguous persona, both equally (im)plausible – render it difficult to say which (if any) of these two positions is the one taken by Pope.

In Scriblerus's annotations on the poem, we can also find further references to Le Bossu's treatise that raise doubts whether his laudatory references to the French critic in "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" should be taken at face value. In the note discussing why Tibbald (or, from 1743 onwards, Cibber) is being portrayed as "supperless", Scriblerus argues that this is what Le Bossu would call a "*disguised sentence*", showing that "Temperance is the life of Study" (*Dunciad* 1.115n, original emphasis).[203] In contrast to "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", in which Pope's stance towards Scriblerus's use of Le Bossu remains ambiguous, the author's irony is rather obvious here. The annotation is a slighting allusion to his enemies Lewis Theobald and Edward Ward, who had both argued that being "supperless" is the sign of a true poet and scholar.[204] But

203 According to Le Bossu, a sentence is a "a Moral Instruction couch'd in a few Words" (Le Bossu 6.4). He goes on to argue that "*Sentences* should be *disguised* […]. The most general Method is, not to declare the Moral Instruction in Universal Terms, but to make an Application of it to the Action on foot" (Le Bossu 6.5, original emphasis).

204 In "The Author to the Reader" in his *Durgen* (an attack against the *Dunciad*s), Ward argues: "Not to abound in Riches, has been the unhappy Characteristick of the greatest Wits in all Ages; therefore, whenever we hear a Brother of the Quill boast of his Equipage and full Tables, he gives us good reason to suspect that he never was born a Poet. To want a Dinner or a Supper either, when Hunger calls, must certainly be a great Mortification to a bright Genius; yet there are some Men of Parts so very studious, that, in a day of Scarcity they can pick a plentiful Meal out of the Works of the Ancients; and, in order to become

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what about Scriblerus's own stance? On the one hand, he might act as Pope's perceptive, humorous spokesman – deliberately misapplying Le Bossu's precepts to make fun of the dunces. On the other hand, Scriblerus might be deadserious about interpreting this passage as a "disguised sentence" and agreeing with Theobald and Ward – a reading for which he is mocked by Pope. Though this annotation does not shed much light on Pope's opinion of Le Bossu's principles in general (Pope uses them to ridicule his enemies rather than mocking these principles themselves), it suggests that Scriblerus is fond of either ironically or mistakenly applying Le Bossu's approach to passages that are clearly not informed by his precepts. This might indicate that his references to Le Bossu in "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" should likewise be seen as either ironical or incorrect. However, since Scriblerus is such an inconsistent and elusive persona, it cannot be taken for granted that he always uses Le Bossu in the same way (be it jokingly or incorrectly).

Nevertheless, there seems to be a pattern: in the other annotations in which Scriblerus refers (though not by name) to Le Bossu, Pope's irony is likewise apparent. In two notes in the second book – right after other annotations provide biographical facts on the persons concerned – Scriblerus explains that James Moore Smythe, Bezaleel Morrice, John Breval, and William Bond should by no means be mistaken for the names of real persons. They are "all phantoms" – the term that Le Bossu often uses to refer to the sketches of characters before their names are decided upon (*Dunciad* 2.126n; cf. 2.50n).[205] Pope thus deliberately misapplies Le Bossu's precepts: in Le Bossu, a phantom is the idea of a character *before* his or her name and background story are chosen, not a name that does not refer to a real person. Here again, Scriblerus could either be ironic (and intelligent) or serious (and stupid) about his explanation, but Pope's own ironic (and distorting) use of Le Bossu is obvious.[206]

Wise Men, go with a better Appetite to their Books, than they do to their Victuals" (Ward, *Durgen* n.pag.). Likewise, in an article in *The Censor* (vol. 2, no. 38, 17 Jan. 1717), Theobald claims that he is "so far of Opinion that our *Common Dreams* proceed from *Repletion* and *Indigestion*, that, to prevent this fantastick Disturbance of my Slumbers, I have for some Years accustom'd my self to go Supperless to Bed" (Theobald, "I am so far of Opinion" 48, original emphasis; cf. editor's n for 1728 *Dunciad* 1.99).

205 For instance, Le Bossu explains that Homer "has given the Name of *Achilles* to a valiant and angry phantom" (Le Bossu 1.8, original emphasis).

206 For both the "supperless" note and the notes on the four 'non-existing' dunces, also see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 103. Another annotation that might implicitly allude to Le Bossu is Scriblerus's (ironic or incorrect) explanation that the line on Henley, who "to mere mortals seem'd a Priest in drink", "presents us with an excellent moral, that we are never to pass judgment merely by *appearances*" (*Dunciad* 2.426n, original emphasis).

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McLaverty argues that the "Index of Matters" which Pope appended to the poem provides yet another indication that Scriblerus's championing of Le Bossu should be read as ironical on Pope's side (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 102). He contends that the entry "TIBBALD, why he was made Hero of this Poem?", which refers readers to both the answer "according to *Scriblerus*" and to the "true reason", shows that Scriblerus is wrong in his prefatory essay (1729 *Dunciad* 365, original emphasis). However, in works like the *Dunciad*s not even the index can be taken at face value. Apart from nonsensical entries like "whirligigs", it also contains highly ironical ones like "Appearances, that we are never to judge by them, especially of Poets and Divines" (referring to the comical annotation explaining that even though Henley seemed drunk, he was, of course, only inspired, see p. 143 above), or "Supperless, a mistake concerning this word set right with respect to Poets and other temperate Students" (referring to Scriblerus's comical note on this word) (1729 *Dunciad* 359; 365). Thus, even though there are indeed signs in the *Dunciad*s that Pope's references to Le Bossu might be ironic, the index does not seem to be one of them.

To conclude, in the 1729 *Dunciad* three of Scriblerus's notes on the poem suggest that Pope is poking fun at Le Bossu or at least that Scriblerus often either jokingly or mistakenly misapplies the French critic's principles. Other paratexts alternately stress and deny the plausibility of Le Bossu's argument that the characters in an epic poem are interchangeable. Lastly, the actual composition history of the *Dunciad*s partly conforms to Le Bossu's ideas. Given these contradictory pieces of evidence, it is impossible to decide whether Pope is being ironic or serious when stressing that the *Dunciad*s conform to Le Bossu's principles. It is likewise impossible to ascertain whether Scriblerus (in his prefatory essay) is used as Pope's serious mouthpiece, as the earnest butt of his joke, or as his co-ironist. In the first case, both Pope and Scriblerus would straightforwardly *employ* Le Bossu's precepts; in the second, Scriblerus would use them seriously and Pope would ridicule his annotator for this; and in the third case, both Pope and Scriblerus would make fun of Le Bossu.

Le Bossu in the 1743 Four-Book Dunciad

Things become even more complicated in 1743, when Bentley, in his "Ricardus Aristarchus of the Hero of the Poem", disparages Le Bossu's approach and Scriblerus's alleged admiration for it. He argues that when Scriblerus

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The term "moral" in Scriblerus's note might suggest that he wishes to portray this as yet another of the "disguised sentences" that Le Bossu commends.

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> cometh to speak of the *Person* of the *Hero* fitted for such poem, in truth he miserably halts and hallucinates. For, misled by one Monsieur Bossu, a Gallic critic, he prateth of I cannot tell what *Phantom of a Hero*, only raised up to support the Fable. A putid conceit! As if Homer and Virgil, like modern Undertakers, who first build their house and then seek out for a tenant, had contrived the story of a War and a Wandering, before they once thought either of Achilles or Aeneas. We shall therefore set our good brother and the world also right in this particular, by giving our word, that in the *greater Epic*, the prime intention of the Muse is to exalt Heroic Virtue, in order to propagate the love of it among the children of men; and consequently that the Poet's first thought must needs be turned upon a real subject meet for laud and celebration; not one whom he is to make, but one whom he may find, truly illustrious. (*Dunciad* 75–76, original emphasis)[207]

Bentley believes that Scriblerus is serious rather than ironical in his references to Le Bossu, and, more importantly, that Scriblerus's interpretative approach is wrong. Should we follow Bentley and reject Scriblerus's interpretation of the *Dunciad*s – and especially of its hero – with reference to Le Bossu? In other words, is Bentley used to voice Pope's rejection of Le Bossu, or is Bentley rather to be ridiculed for his disparaging comments on the French critic? The main argument that speaks in favour of Bentley and against Scriblerus is that, as the former points out, Le Bossu's argument that the epic hero is only chosen late in the composition process is indeed rather counterintuitive. Bentley spotted the major weak spot of Le Bossu's approach and really rubs it in.

Then, however, there are several indicators that Bentley may, in fact, be wrong. First of all, the aggressive and insulting tone (though still a far cry from that of the real Bentley) reminds readers that, after all, Pope is here imitating the writing style of one of his enemies and of one of the main victims of the 1743 *Dunciad*. The similarity between the tone of this passage and that of the works of the actual Bentley might thus serve as a warning sign – the fictional Bentley's prefatory essay to the 1743 *Dunciad* may be just as absurd as the real one's to his edition of *Paradise Lost* (see p. 54f. above). Furthermore, Bentley's whole diatribe against Le Bossu is embedded in a context that is

207 In "Richardus Artistarchus of the Poem", there is yet another allusion to Le Bossu when Bentley remarks: "It hath been long, and alas for pity! still remaineth a question, whether the Hero of the *greater Epic* should be an *honest man?* or, as the French critics express it, *un honnête homme*; but it never admitted of any doubt but that the Hero of the *little Epic* should *not* be so" (*Dunciad* 78, original emphasis). This question is discussed by Le Bossu in book 4, chapter 5 of his treatise and is concerned with the fact that a man of rather questionable morals like Achilles can just as well be the hero of an epic poem as a virtuous man like Aeneas. It is not entirely clear whether Bentley is using Le Bossu seriously here (which would contradict his attitude to the French critic elsewhere), or whether he is again ridiculing him.

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highly ironical on Pope's side, i.e. the discussion of why Cibber has always been the hero of the *Dunciad*s. What is more, the substitution of Cibber for Tibbald as king of the dunces might even support the reliance of the *Dunciad*s on Le Bossu's principles, given that it makes use of the interchangeability of the epic hero which is so central to Le Bossu's treatise (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 101–02n32). Moreover, the very ending of the quoted passage hints at one of the main problems of Bentley's line of argument: when the first version of the *Dunciad*s was written and published, Cibber could not be *found* "truly illustrious" because at that time he was not yet Poet Laureate, nor had he published his provocative *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*. The composition of the poem preceded the choice of its hero – just as Le Bossu asserts. Strangely enough, when talking about the genre of the Little Epic (i.e. comic or satiric epic) in general, even Bentley himself to some extent describes the poet's search for a hero in the terms of Le Bossu: "some notorious Vehicle of vice and folly was sought out, to make thereof an example" (*Dunciad* 77).

In summary, even though there are many hints that Bentley here is the butt of Pope's joke rather than his mouthpiece, the very fact that Bentley (like Pope in his "Receit") addresses one of the major problems in Le Bossu's approach (the late choice of the epic hero) suggests that there is at least a ray of truth in his discussion. All in all, Bentley's rejection of Le Bossu does nothing to clarify the stance that Pope takes towards the French critic. Rather, it serves to ambiguate Scriblerus's discussion of the matter even more because it raises uncertainty in those readers who might hitherto have taken Scriblerus's arguments at face value.

Conclusion

Scriblerus's alleged championing of Le Bossu (and Pope's possible attitude towards this championing) has been discussed by several critics (Keener *passim*; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 99–105; McTague 212–21). Yet, none of them have considered how our interpretation of this matter may be influenced by the fact that Scriblerus is a highly ambiguous figure throughout the *Dunciad*s and that his approach is challenged by the likewise ambiguous Bentley. What is more, both Keener (who for the most part agrees with Scriblerus's interpretation that the *Dunciad*s follow Le Bossu) and McLaverty (who mainly rejects it) often neglect the contradictory textual evidence that the *Dunciad*s provide regarding this issue and primarily focus on hints that substantiate their own interpretation. But as I have shown, the question is far too intricate to allow for a definite answer – not only due to the ambiguity of the *Dunciad*s but also because Pope's attitude towards Le Bossu in his other works is not unequivocal either. In the *Dunciad*s, then, the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley increases

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the ambiguity whether Le Bossu's precepts should be ridiculed or whether the French critic's treatise indeed sheds light on certain aspects of the poem.

This ambiguation may be employed for multiple purposes. The conflict between, and the ambiguity of, Scriblerus and Bentley might serve to enact Pope's own ambivalence towards Le Bossu. It might also enable Pope to draw attention to those points in Le Bossu's treatise on which he disagrees with him – without, however, having to attack the French critic directly. Moreover, Pope's unclear approach towards Le Bossu raises two questions about the genre of the *Dunciad*s – the first being more concerned with the intratextual function of the paratexts, the second more with their socio-pragmatic function.

First, are the *Dunciad*s comic epics, which adhere to the conventions of epic poetry (as they are laid down by Le Bossu) but employ them for comical and satirical purposes (cf. Keener 44)? Or are they, rather, mock-epics, which deliberately undermine and ridicule these conventions of epic poetry (cf. McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 104)? The ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley and the ambiguity of Pope's attitude towards Le Bossu ensure that the exact relation of the *Dunciad*s to their epic models likewise remains ambiguous.

And, second, are the *Dunciad*s personal or general satires, i.e. do they attack specific individuals or common human shortcomings? As John McTague convincingly argues, "Pope is both following and undermining Le Bossu's recommendations", using the references to him in order to keep the dunces "in that productive limbo between full personhood and symbol" (McTague 214; 212).[208] They are both actual, unique persons that were included in the *Dunciad*s for their very personal vices and misdeeds, *and* interchangeable types. They are both real people *and* "phantoms" in Le Bossu's sense of the word. Thus, Pope's ambiguous references to Le Bossu's concept of the epic hero contribute to the ambiguity of personal vs. general satire, which is a constant issue in the *Dunciad*s. At first sight, Pope's satire seems to be the most personal attack possible. After all, he names his victims and provides a wealth of information on them in his notes. Yet, though naming and annotating the dunces is vital to the *Dunciad*s, so is denying the dunces' individuality (or even existence), as well as stressing their interchangeability, and distorting their image to such an extent that the dunces in the poem hardly resemble their real-life models. The gutted names in the 1728 *Dunciad* likewise serve to reconcile personal and

208 A similar argument is brought forward by Aubrey Williams who, however, does not discuss Pope's ambiguous references to Le Bossu in this context. He points out that any approach that either sees "the persons involved as types, the situation as wholly fictionalized" or that, in turn, interprets the work only as a "personal satire" and a "historical document" is too simplistic (A. L. Williams 76; cf. 60–76).

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general satire by pretending that the personal satire is, in fact, general. False identifications of these names (e.g. in Curll's *Key*) and Pope's later substitutions of dunces from one edition to another show that there is indeed a certain kind of generality about the (gutted) names in the *Dunciad*s. If Pope was *exclusively* attacking specific individuals, it would be impossible to fill in the blanks with others' names. The fact that Pope is able to exchange dunces for one another also drives home the urgency of his satire: the *Dunciad*s are needed precisely because there are *so many* figures engaged in various duncical pursuits that if one is omitted from the poem, another can easily take his place. Nevertheless, the question of personal vs. general satire also to some extent casts doubt on the underlying moral motivation of the *Dunciad*s and points to their ethical ambiguity: personal satire may be seen as both effective and cruel, while general satire may be seen as both ineffective and fair-minded (cf. also McTague 209; 212–15).[209] This, in turn, contributes to Pope's ambiguous self-presentation in the *Dunciad*s as both justified, moral satirist and amoral though witty libeller (see chapters 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). Pope's use of Scriblerus and Bentley to ambiguously refer to Le Bossu hence not only makes it impossible to ascertain his attitude towards the French critic but also to highlight several of the *Dunciad*s' global ambiguities.

2.3.4 *Scriblerus, Bentley, and the Ambiguity of Dulness's Triumph*

Scriblerus's and Bentley's notes on Le Bossu ambiguate the genre of the *Dunciad*s and, thereby, to some extent Pope's self-presentation, but the extent to which they ambiguate the overall tone and meaning of the work as well as how it portrays the outside world is rather limited. Things lie differently in the present subchapter, which will show how the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley is used to address and complicate one of the central questions of the *Dunciad*s, namely 'how dangerous are the dunces really?' (cf. Todd *passim*). Is Pope's satire a fundamentally pessimistic work that depicts the erosion of values and the downfall of culture, or is it a rather light-hearted personal attack against untalented, tasteless, mercenary persons of all walks of life, who pose no real danger to anyone? Is it merely concerned with attacking aesthetic shortcomings, or does it imply that such shortcomings point to much more unsettling moral failures? Do Dulness and her followers succeed in vanquishing the strongholds of art, science, and religion, or does Pope depict their triumph

209 For the attitudes of Augustan satirist towards the moral questions raised by personal satire, see p. 120 above. For further comments on the issue of personal vs. general satire in the *Dunciad*s, see Baines and P. Rogers 195; Vander Meulen, *Pope's* Dunciad *of 1728* 24; and Elkin 122.

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ironically, suggesting that they are incompetent, harmless fools, who will never be able to advance the cause of "Chaos" and "Universal Darkness"? And, finally, should our answers to these questions differ depending on whether we are talking about the three-book or the four-book versions of the *Dunciad*s?

The ways in which Pope uses a cluster of annotations and other (para)textual elements renders conclusive answers to these questions impossible. This cluster can be found in the third and – in the 1743 version – fourth books of the *Dunciad*s and features no less than six notes that are signed by Bentley or Scriblerus. The crux of the matter revolves around the fact that in the third book the sleeping Tibbald (in the 1728–1742 versions) or Cibber (in the 1743 version) is presented with a vision of Dulness's past, present, and future triumphs. The book then ends with this vision flying out of the ivory gate. According to classical belief, however, only *false* dreams come through this gate; true ones are sent through the gate of horn.[210] The various annotations and other (para)textual elements that I will consider here contradict each other: some affirm that the reference to the ivory gate means that Tibbald's/Cibber's vision of Dulness's ultimate triumph is only a chimaera with no basis in reality, while others refute this notion and suggest that Dulness indeed ends up victorious.

To make matters even more complicated, in almost all of these cases, it is impossible to decide whether these confirmations and denials are serious or ironic. Both of these factors – the contradictory statements and the equivocal seriousness of these statements – render the *Dunciad*s ambiguous in their entirety concerning the question whether the depiction of Dulness's triumph and the dunces' dangerousness is serious or a playful, ironic exaggeration.

By focussing on the contradictory information that Pope provides on the dunces' dangerousness and potential success, I will be following Daniel Deneau, George Atkins, and Dennis Todd, who all stress the ambiguity of the

210 The first mention of the concept of the gates of ivory and horn can be found as early as in Homer's *Odyssey*: "Two portals firm the various phantoms keep: / Of iv'ry one; whence flit to mock the brain, / Of winged Lies a light fantastic train: / The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn, / Where images of truth for passage wait, / With visions manifest of future fate" (Homer, *Odyssey* 19.657–63, Pope et al. transl.).

A passage from book 3, carmen 27 of Horace's odes suggests that the Romans, too, usually understood the ivory gate as the entrance through which only false dreams pass and *not* as a reference to truths that are, however, allegorically or otherwise indirectly presented (this point will become relevant below, see p. 196ff.). In this passage, Europa, who has just been abducted by Zeus, wonders "[a]m I awake and do I lament a hideous deed, or am I free from sin and does some phantom mock me, that flying idle through the ivory gate, brings but a dream?" (Horace, *Odes and Epodes* 3.27.38–44, transl. Bennett). For the problem that Virgil's *Aeneid* appears to use the ivory gate in a different sense, see below.

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*Dunciad*s in this regard (cf. Deneau *passim*; Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 159–62; Todd *passim*). What my analysis adds to theirs is that (1) I am including a wider range of textual elements that are related to the question of Dulness's victory and the dunces' dangerousness; (2) I am taking into account the ambiguity of Pope's source for the ivory gate, i.e. the end of the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*; and (3) I will show that the global ambiguity of Pope's satire heavily relies on the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley.

The crux of the whole question – the reference to the ivory gate – can be found in both the 1729 *Dunciad* and the 1743 *Dunciad*, though the framing of this passage is very different in these two versions of the work.[211] For this reason, I will first analyse the 1729 version and then discuss the ways in which the 1743 four-book version deviates from it. Since the passages that I am going to discuss are highly convoluted and self-contradictory, I also provide a tabular overview of the different ambiguities and possibilities of interpreting them in the appendix (see p. 399ff.).

2.3.4.1 The Ivory Gate in the 1729 *Dunciad*: Pure Irony?

In the 1729 *Dunciad*, the first annotated passage relevant to the issue discussed here appears at the very beginning of the third book and describes how Dulness sends a vision to Tibbald, who is sleeping on her lap:

> But in her Temple's last recess inclos'd,
> On Dulness lap th' Anointed head repos'd.
> Him close she curtain'd round with vapors blue,
> And soft besprinkled with Cimmerian dew.
> Then raptures high the seat of sense o'erflow,
> Which only heads, refin'd from reason, know.
> Hence, from the straw where Bedlam's Prophet nods,
> He hears loud Oracles, and talks with Gods.
> Hence the Fool's paradise, the Statesman's scheme,
> The air-built Castle, and the golden Dream,
> The Maids [sic] romantic wish, the Chymists [sic] flame,
> And Poets [sic] vision of eternal fame. (1729 *Dunciad* 3.1–12)

Even the passage itself raises questions as to the veracity of Tibbald's dream. At first, it seems that his vision is of a kind that only appears to Bedlamites,

211 In the 1728 version, there is no mention of the ivory gate, and the veracity of Tibbald's vision is not explicitly discussed. The very last lines in this version read: "All shall be darkness, as it ne'er were Day; / To their first Chaos Wit's vain works shall fall, / And universal Dulness cover all! / No more the Monarch could such raptures bear; / He wak'd, and all the Vision mix'd with air" (1728 *Dunciad* 3.282–86).

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fools, scheming politicians,[212] infatuated maids, and alchemists. This makes it unlikely that the vision is to be trusted. However, the passage ends with the claim that a "Poets [sic] vision of eternal Fame" can also be subsumed under this group. This statement can either be read as a despondent concession that literary posthumous fame is impossible or, on the contrary, as a self-ironic but hopeful wish for, or even conviction of, poetic immortality. (After all, Pope was extremely preoccupied with his literary afterlife and, furthermore, had spent several years translating a nearly three-thousand-years-old poem – the ultimate proof that poetic immortality is, at least in some cases, not an idle dream.) If the line is interpreted in the latter way, it suggests that such visions may indeed contain a ray of truth.[213] Hence, even though the beginning of the third book contains far more evidence that Tibbald's vision will be a false one, it is not entirely unequivocal. Scriblerus, then, adds the following annotation on the passage:

> Hereby is intimated that the following Vision is no more than the Chimera of the Dreamer's brain, and not a real or intended satire on the Present Age, doubtless more learned, more enlighten'd, and more abounding with great Genius's in Divinity, Politics, and whatever Arts and Sciences, than all the preceding. For fear of any such mistake of our Poet's honest meaning, he hath again at the end of this Vision, repeated this monition, saying that it all past thro' the *Ivory gate*, which (according to the Ancients) denoteth Falsity. SCRIBLERUS. (*Dunciad* 3.5–6n, original emphasis)

In the note (the irony or seriousness of which will be discussed below, p. 183), Scriblerus backs up his interpretation with a reference to the very ending of the third book, which reads as follows:

> See! the dull stars roll round and re-appear.
> She comes! the Cloud-compelling Pow'r, behold!
> With Night Primaeval, and with Chaos old.
> Lo! the great Anarch's ancient reign restor'd,
> Light dies before her uncreating word:
> As one by one, at dread Medaea's strain,
> The sick'ning Stars fade off the aethereal plain;
> . . . . . .

212 Probably an allusion to the disastrous South Sea scheme, putting special emphasis on the negative meaning of "scheme" as a "self-seeking or an underhand project, a plot [...] or a visionary or foolish project" (*OED* "scheme, *n.*1." def. 5.b.).

213 The veracity of the vision of poetic fame also depends on whether we read it as referring to poets in general or as referring to the hopes of the sleeping Tibbald. In the former case, the vision can indeed sometimes become true, while in the latter case it is – at least in Pope's view – only a chimaera.

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> Art after Art goes out, and all is Night.
> . . . . . .
> Thy hand great Dulness! lets the curtain fall,
> And universal Darkness covers all.
> Enough! enough! the raptur'd Monarch cries;
> And thro' the Ivory Gate the Vision flies. (1729 *Dunciad* 3.336–42; 3.346; 3.355–58)

In this passage, too, it hard to determine whether the reference to the ivory gate is serious or ironic. Pope could use it as a straightforward defence and claim that he does not truly mean to suggest that contemporary culture is on the verge of destruction. However, Pope's use of the ivory gate may also be a tongue-in-cheek and deliberately half-hearted safety mechanism against accusations that his satire is too risky. His reference to the ivory gate wavers between defence and mock-defence. The annotation on this passage (which will be discussed in more detail below, p. 183) does not help to clear up the confusion. It reads:

> [...] As Prophecy hath ever been one of the chief provinces of Poesy, our poet here foretells from what we feel, what we are to fear; and in the style of other Prophets, hath used the future tense for the preterit: since what he says shall be, is already to be seen, in the writings of some even of our most adored authors, in Divinity, Philosophy, Physics, Metaphysics, *etc.* (who are too good indeed to be named in such company.) Do not gentle reader, rest too secure in thy contempt of the Instruments for such a revolution in learning, or despise such weak agents as have been described in our poem, but remember what the *Dutch* stories somewhere relate, that a great part of their Provinces was once overflow'd, by a small opening made in one of their dykes by a single *Water-Rat.*
>
> However, that such is not seriously the judgment of our Poet, but that he conceiveth better hopes from the diligence of our Schools, from the regularity of our Universities, the discernment of our Great men, the encouragement of our Patrons, and the genius of our Writers in all kinds, (notwithstanding some few exceptions in each) may plainly be seen from his conclusion; where by causing all this Vision to pass thro' the *Ivory Gate*, he expressly in the language of poesy declares all such imaginations to be wild, ungrounded, and fictitious. – SCRIBLERUS. (1729 *Dunciad* 3.337–38n, original emphasis)

Critics' reactions to the two passages and annotations just quoted vary. There are those who argue in favour of the *Dunciad*s being pessimistic works that describe the end of culture and the triumph of Dulness. These tend to simply ignore the reference to the ivory gate (and Scriblerus's assertion that Tibbald's vision is indeed false) and usually only refer to the first paragraph of the note above, which stresses the dunces' dangerousness. Scholars who take this approach include Aubrey Williams, Tony Tanner, Ian Jack, Manfred Broich, and

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Tom Jones.[214] At the opposite end of the spectrum, we can find, among others, Donald Siebert, Douglas Brooks-Davies, Dustin Griffin, and, at least to some extent, Paul Baines.[215] These critics put special emphasis on Pope's mention of the ivory gate and (partly) agree with Scriblerus's contention that the prophecy presented to Tibbald is just a fanciful chimaera, leading them to conclude that the *Dunciad*s are more light-hearted and optimistic than is often supposed. In doing so, however, they take Scriblerus at face value and ignore both the potential irony of his notes and the fact that the truth value of these notes is called into question elsewhere in the *Dunciad*s. Thus, both opposing approaches try

214 Critics who only quote the first paragraph without acknowledging that this claim is contradicted in the very same note are, for example, Erskine-Hill, *Pope* 38–39; Broich 148; A. L. Williams 59; and Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 162. Williams sees Dulness and her followers as agents "dedicated to the destruction of one order and to the miscreation of a new"; they will inaugurate an age in which "traditional values are eradicated", and they can truly be depicted as dangerous, quasi-Satanic forces (A. L. Williams 97; 59; cf. 131–58). Similarly, the scenery of the *Dunciad*s has been described as an "alienated world of monsters and final annihilation" (Tanner 159), the end of the four-book version as "all-embracing in its pessimism" (Jack, *Augustan Satire* 120), and Dulness as a "symptom of cultural decline" (Broich 148). Furthermore, in his political reading of the *Dunciad*s, Jones pronounces it to be a poem that acknowledges "the awful defeat of protective, nostalgic Tory and Old Whig attitudes to cultural and civic life" (T. Jones 900).

215 Donald Siebert famously dubs pessimistic critics the "School of Deep Intent" and argues that the *Dunciad*s are "more good fun than anything else" (Siebert, "Cibber and Satan" 204; 211). Even in the fourth book, he contends, Pope is asserting his dominance over the dunces by ironically describing their final victory while actually emphasising that, due to their boundless incompetence, they are always defeating themselves (cf. Siebert, "Cibber and Satan" *passim*). Douglas Brooks-Davies, who adopts a political approach towards the *Dunciad*s, partly confirms this optimistic outlook and bases his argument on the mention of the ivory gate. Brooks-Davies follows Scriblerus's interpretation and argues that the reference to the ivory gate means that "the vision of Dulness's victory is itself false; that her darkness and her fake Augustus can be banished with a simple *fiat*" and that "a victory for the Jacobites is still possible" (Brooks-Davies 65, original emphasis). Dustin Griffin likewise draws attention to the image of the ivory gate and argues that both in the three-book and the four-book *Dunciad*s it "acts as a reminder of authorial control. With a flick of his wand, Pope denies the vision's truth" (Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274). As will be discussed below, in the four-book version the image of the ivory gate is not moved to the ending of the poem but remains appended to the conclusion of the third book – thereby no longer undermining the final triumph of Dulness. However, Griffin argues that another image at the very ending of the four-book *Dunciad* – that of Chaos "let[ting] the curtain fall" (*Dunciad* 4.655) – takes its place and suggests that, "after all, it was but a show" (Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274). Paul Baines also argues that, at least in the three-book version, the mention of the ivory gate (and Scriblerus's annotations on it) leave "open the possibility of redemption" and of still preventing Dulness's victory (cf. Baines, *Complete Critical Guide* 141).

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to arrive at an unequivocal reading of the third book (and the *Dunciad*s in their entirety) by partly neglecting contradictory textual evidence.[216]

There are, in fact, a multitude of factors that ambiguate Scriblerus's two notes, the third book, and Pope's satire as a whole, while making disambiguation impossible. In the 1729 *Dunciad*, these are (1) the argument to the third book, (2) the semi-ironic tone of Scriblerus's notes, (3) the fact that not everything he says in these notes is wrong, (4) Scriblerus's overall ambiguity with respect to his intelligence and use of irony, (5) Pope's reference to the (highly ambiguous) ending of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* as his source for the ivory gate, and (6) the fact that the annotation on the ending of the third book (ostensibly) proposes two mutually exclusive evaluations of the threat posed by the dunces.

The Argument to the Third Book: A Pisgah-Sight of Dulness's Triumph

The argument to the third book of the 1729 *Dunciad* explains that this book only affords a "*Pisgah-sight*" of Dulness's final victory (1729 *Dunciad* 171, original emphasis). The description of the "Accomplishment" of the "Fulness of her [Dulness's] Glory" will, as the argument goes on to explain, be found in the fourth book, which is not yet included in the 1729 version and which would only be published thirteen years later (1729 *Dunciad* 171). The expression "*Pisgah-Sight*" refers to Mount Pisgah, from the top of which Moses saw the promised land which his descendants (but not he himself) would reach (cf. *King James Bible*, Deut. 34.1–4). Hence, in the most common usage, the expression alludes to a future event that is still distant but that will definitely come to pass.[217] According to the *OED*, the term "Pisgah" itself can also refer to a

216 Griffin, however, points out that the more optimistic, irreverent notes should be "balanced against Pope's numerous suggestions that Dulness and dunces in fact *do* constitute a real threat" (Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274n141, original emphasis). Later, he also concedes that he has put his stress "(perhaps excessively) on the poem's counterplot [i.e. the optimistic aspects]. Pope would appear to be (and want a reader to be) in two minds about the threat that Dulness posed to the supremacy of true wit" (Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274n141). Thus, Griffin acknowledges the ambiguity of the third book (and the *Dunciad*s in their entirety) but nevertheless mainly emphasises one side of the argument.

217 It is not only the term "*Pisgah*" that is equivocal; the expression "*Pisgah-Sight*" is potentially ambiguous as well. The *OED* defines it as a "faint view or glimpse of something unobtainable or distant" (*OED* "Pisgah, *n.*" def. I.1.). Hence, the term can either mean that what is seen is entirely unrealistic or that it is only spatially or temporally distant. However, I could not find an example of the expression being used in the former sense during Pope's time; it is probable that he only uses it in the latter. If one argues that Pope was aware of the former meaning as well, the central ambiguity of the third book, i.e.

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"point affording an overview or glimpse of a current or future situation", i.e. of something that may already have become reality (*OED* "Pisgah, *n.*" def. II.2.).

The expression "*Pisgah-Sight*" is thus ambiguous with respect to the question whether Dulness's triumph will only happen in the future (as is asserted in the argument) or whether it has already occurred (as is argued in the first half of the note for 3.337–38 and described in the poem from 3.229 onwards). What is unequivocal in this argument, however, is that Dulness will indeed conquer the world. As such, it stands in direct contrast to the very beginning of the third book which mainly stresses the outlandishness of the vision that is about to follow, and to the 'harmless' interpretation that is ostensibly proposed by Scriblerus in his notes.[218] The argument to the third book hence suggests that the vision of Dulness's triumph is by no means a chimaera.

Stressing the Fictionality of Tibbald's Dream: Seriously or Ironically?

The emphasis above must rest on '*ostensibly* proposed by Scriblerus' because it is not clear whether he is being serious or ironical in his two annotations on the ivory gate. The same goes for Pope himself whose stance towards this annotator persona and his arguments is ambiguous here. In both annotations signed by Scriblerus – one at the very beginning of the third book, one at the very end – readers can detect strong hints of irony, especially in the boundless praise of the present age, which is described as "doubtless more learned, more enlighten'd, and more abounding with great Genius's in Divinity, Politics, and whatever Arts and Sciences, than all the preceding", thanks to the "diligence of our Schools, […] the regularity of our Universities, the discernment of our Great men, the encouragement of our Patrons, and the genius of our Writers in all kinds" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.5–6n; 3.337–38n). These annotations evoke notions that an enthusiastic adherent of the Moderns might embrace, not someone like Pope. The fact that they are part of a satire (rather than, for example, an encomiastic speech) likewise suggests that they are to be interpreted as ironical.

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whether Dulness's triumph is imminent or just a fantasy, would also be indicated by the ambiguity of "*Pisgah-Sight*".

218 To make matters even more confusing, it is implied that the arguments to the *Dunciad*s are 'written' by Scriblerus as well. Like the "Testimonies of Authors" and "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem", they are included in the prefatory section "The Prolegomena of Martinus Scriblerus", though from the 1735c *Dunciad* onwards they were printed before each book respectively (cf. editor's n for Pope, 1729 *Dunciad* 169). If one accepts that the arguments are supposed to be penned by Scriblerus as well, this would mean that he makes mutually exclusive claims about the likelihood of Dulness's triumph and the veracity of the vision in book three. Given his contradictory approaches to textual criticism and his varying degrees of intelligence, irony, and self-awareness throughout the *Dunciad*s, this would not be too surprising.

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Then, however, it has to be acknowledged that the *Dunciad*s (especially in the three-book version) are far from being in utter despair over contemporary culture. Pope praises authors like Addison, Garth, Gay, Prior, Wycherley, Congreve, and Swift, and – in the notes to 1729 *Dunciad* 3.324–28 – reminds readers of the recent triumphs scored by himself and his friends, i.e. Burlington's restoration of Covent Garden Church, Gay's *Beggar's Opera*,[219] Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, and his own *Iliad* translation (cf. Griffin 272–73). Furthermore, there were indeed contemporary politicians, divines, and patrons that were admired by Pope (one need only think of Bolingbroke, Bathurst, Atterbury, and Oxford, though they had fallen out of popular grace by the time when the first version of the *Dunciad*s was published). In addition, the *Dunciad*s explicitly extol scientists like Newton and Locke, who – though already dead by the publication of the *Dunciad*s – might still count as contemporary enough to inspire some hope about the state of the universities (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 2.132n; 3.213–14). Hence, the praise of modernity in Scriblerus's notes seems neither entirely serious nor entirely ironical on Pope's part.

What adds to the confusion is that – even if one rejects his assertion that the present age abounds with genius – Scriblerus is, *generally speaking*, correct in explaining that the Ancients saw the ivory gate as the portal through which only false visions pass (see p. 177 above). As a consequence, the interpretation he proposes in his notes cannot be discounted as completely ludicrous, despite their rather ironic overtones. Furthermore, the information that we receive about Scriblerus elsewhere in the *Dunciad*s (and other Scriblerian productions) does not help to clarify his stance towards his own annotations and, in turn, Pope's attitude towards him. Are both Scriblerus and Pope primarily ironic in these notes, i.e. is Scriblerus acting as Pope's intelligent and humorous co-satirist and suggesting that the vision of Dulness's triumph is real after all?[220] Are both of them serious in their assertion that the whole book is just a fanciful vision, i.e. does Pope employ Scriblerus as his straightforward spokesman to deny the veracity of Tibbald's dream? Or is Scriblerus serious about his interpretation and being made the butt of Pope's joke, who ridicules this

219 It should, however, be noted that Pope also potentially slightly criticises Gay and his *Beggar's Opera* in the very note in which he extols him (see chapter 2.2.3.2).

220 It is either this reading or the third one – suggesting that Scriblerus is serious, while Pope is ironic – that is also proposed by McTague. He argues that Scriblerus is obviously wrong about both the illusory nature of the dream and the book not being satirical and that "[t]he ivory gate […] is one means of dulling the edge of Pope's particular satire. Yet it is a particularly half-hearted one" (McTague 197). Far from alleviating Pope's satire by denying its satirical quality and contemporary import, Scriblerus actually offers "a burlesque of such manoeuvres" and "is to be read ironically" (McTague 197).

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interpretation of the third book as false? In this case, Scriblerus would misunderstand the poem and not notice that it refers to the ivory gate only ironically. Due to the conflicting pieces of information – in the annotations, the third book, and the *Dunciad*s as a whole – neither of these constellations can be conclusively rejected or accepted.

The Ambiguity of the Ivory Gate in the Aeneid

Matters are made even more complicated by an unsigned note appended to the very end of the third book, which quotes (in Latin) the end of the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* (cf. 1729 *Dunciad* 3.358n).[221] This annotation shows that Pope does not allude to the notion of the ivory gate in general but specifically to its use in the *Aeneid* – a use that is highly ambiguous.

In the sixth book of Virgil's epic, Aeneas descends to the underworld and meets his dead father Anchises who prophesises to him, among other things, Tarquin's overthrow by Lucius Junius Brutus, various Roman conquests, and the reign of Augustus. Virgil's readers, of course, knew that all of these prophecies referred to actual historical events.[222] At the conclusion of the sixth book, then, we are presented with the following mention of the gate of ivory:

> Two Gates the silent House of Sleep adorn;
> Of polish'd Iv'ry this, that of transparent Horn:
> True Visions thro' transparent Horn arise;
> Thro' polish'd Iv'ry pass deluding Lies.
> . . . . . .
> Then, thro' the Gate of Iv'ry, he [Anchises] dismiss'd
> His valiant Offspring and divining Guest.
> (Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.1235–38; 6.1241–42, transl. Dryden)

Virgil's decision to make Aeneas leave the underworld through the gate of ivory instead of horn has been highly debated from Antiquity onwards and was still a contentious topic in Pope's age. Even today it is seen as "perhaps the greatest

221 Deneau, in his otherwise excellent discussion of Scriblerus's notes on the ivory gate, does not consider the ambiguity of Pope's source text. He argues that it is likely that Scriblerus's annotations indicate that the ivory gate in the *Dunciad*s is not used in its traditional sense (i.e. as the gate of false dreams) but as an "inverted symbol" (Deneau 210). The reference to the Aeneid, however, shows that even Pope's literary source does not use the concept in a straightforwardly traditional sense.

222 Likewise, in the *Dunciad*s, Elkanah Settle prophesises things to Tibbald that readers knew (or were told by the annotations) to have already happened (e.g. the extravagant theatre performances described in 1729 *Dunciad* 3.229–72, Eusden becoming poet laureate mentioned in 3.319, and Pope spending years translating the *Iliad* referred to in 3.328).

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puzzle in the *Aeneid*" (Fratantuono, "A Brief Reflection on the Gates of Sleep" 628).[223] Why does Virgil present his readers with events that they knew had already happened and then imply that everything Aeneas had seen was a lie? Should we interpret Aeneas's vision as just a fanciful chimaera? Did Virgil simply make a mistake by referring to the gate of ivory instead of horn here? Or does it mean that Aeneas was presented with allegorical representations of truth rather than with truth directly? All three of these possibilities (and many more) were entertained in Pope's age.

In a note in Pope, Fenton, and Broome's *Odyssey* translation, we are told that Aeneas leaving the underworld through the ivory gate in the *Aeneid* means that "all that he relates is nothing but a dream, and that dream a falsehood" and that, rather than being criticised for this decision, Virgil should be "prais'd for his ingenuity" (Homer, *Odyssey* 11.789n, transl. Pope et al.). In this case, the ivory gate is indeed still seen as the origin of false dreams. (It is likely that this annotation was written by Broome; cf. Kelsall 376.) Dryden, in the annotations on his translation of the *Aeneid*, also pronounces the ivory gate to be the origin of untrue visions: "Such [dreams] as pass through the Iv'ry Gate, are [...] polish'd Lies" (Dryden, *Works* 6: 825). Addison, however, in his "Tom Folio" essay (*Tatler*, vol. 158, 12 Apr. 1710), concedes that one should simply accept that Virgil "probably had his Oversights as well as another Author", i.e. that the reference to the gate of ivory instead of the gate of horn is just a mistake by the author (Addison, "Tom Folio" 1). And William Warburton, in 1738, proposed a much more complex hypothesis, which would become of outmost relevance to the 1743 four-book *Dunciad* (see below). Pope's opinion on this passage in the *Aeneid* is not known.

What all of this means for Scriblerus's notes, for book three of the *Dunciad*s, and for the satire as a whole is that our interpretation of Pope's text depends on how we interpret Virgil's. And since there was no universally accepted or universally discredited reading of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (nor is there one now), the *Dunciad*s likewise remain ambiguous. It is possible that, by referring to Virgil, Pope suggests that Scriblerus is right and that Tibbald's vision of Dulness's triumph is indeed false. It is just as possible that he uses the intertextual reference to suggest that Scriblerus misunderstands the concept of the ivory gate. In this case, Tibbald's dream (just like Aeneas's) would show the true vision of an event that did not lie in the future but that – for Pope's contemporaries – had already come to pass. (This latter option might

223 For modern interpretations of Virgil's reference to the ivory gate, see, for example, Fratantuono, "A Brief Reflection on the Gates of Sleep"; Kilpatrick, "The Stuff of Doors and Dreams"; and Ventura, "The Death of the Father".

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perhaps also imply a jibe against Broome, who, in his *Odyssey* note, had argued in favour of the ivory gate only showing false visions.)

What is more, Pope's Latin annotation quoting the *Aeneid* would most likely have evoked different reactions in different readerships. Those unfamiliar with classical literature might simply have read it as a straightforward identification of Pope's source, without being aware of the controversy regarding Virgil's passage. In this case, their trust in Scriblerus's interpretation of the book would not have been undermined by the note. (For a similar strategy, see chapter 2.2.2.3.) Readers with a classical education would most likely immediately have spotted the ambiguity but would have been at a loss to decide whether the classical source supports or contradicts Scriblerus's notes. What would have been clear to them, however, is that Pope ambiguated the ending of the third book *strategically*. He could simply have chosen an ancient text in which the ivory gate is unambiguously presented as the portal through which only false visions pass (see, e.g., the passages quoted on p. 177 n above), but he picked the one reference that turns this notion on its head. (For Pope's strategic use of ambiguous literary sources, also see chapter 2.2.1.2.)

A Self-Contradictory Annotation

One last point in the 1729 *Dunciad* needs to be considered, namely the long self-contradictory note on the end of the third book quoted above (1729 *Dunciad* 3.337–38). This annotation first suggests that the events prophesised to Tibbald do not lie in the future but have already come to pass and that one should not underestimate the dunces' destructive potential.[224] Then, suddenly, it claims that this "is not seriously the judgment of our Poet" and that Tibbald's visions are "wild, ungrounded, and fictitious" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.337–38n).[225] The note can hence be read as proposing that "all instances of chaos

224 One might relate this to Thomas Jemielity's reading of the *Dunciad*s as mock-apocalyptic works. He argues that biblical apocalyptic writings are likewise concerned with things that have already come to pass: "In the case of apocalypse, the predictions are known to have been after the fact; apocalypse predicts accurately because the events it forecasts have already occurred. The two most striking examples are the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the subject of the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, and the persecution of the Christians, perhaps under Domitian, which prompts the encouragement offered to Christians in the Book of Revelation" (Jemielity, "'Consummatum Est'" 169–70).

225 It is not entirely clear whether Scriblerus is responsible for the whole annotation or only for the second half, i.e. whether Scriblerus disagrees with himself (it would not be the first time in the *Dunciad*s!) or with an anonymous annotator who is supposed to have written the first half of the annotation. Several scholars argue in favour of Scriblerus being the author of the entire note (cf. Erskine-Hill, *Pope* 38–39; Schmidt 137; A. L. Williams 59). What supports this argument is the appellation "gentle reader" (used in the first half)

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are drawn from contemporary fact" but at the same time as arguing that "[t]he dramatic fiction of the dream vision places the spectre of chaos [only] within the mind of Tibbald" (Todd 190). Which (if either) of these interpretations is to be trusted?

The first half of the note, which proclaims the triumph of the dunces, is supported by the fact that everything that is being prophesised to Tibbald had indeed already become reality at the time when the first version of the *Dunciad*s was published. Another reason brought forward in this first half is that – despite the fact that they are depicted as ridiculous, ephemeral figures – one must not misjudge of the dunces' dangerousness because the "*Dutch* stories somewhere relate, that a great part of their Provinces was once overflow'd, by a small opening made in one of their dykes by a single *Water-Rat*" (1729 *Dunciad* 3.337–38n, original emphasis). Even one insignificant dunce can cause significant destruction.

What first appears to be an apt image to evoke the threat posed by the dunces, however, raises some doubts about the seriousness of this warning. On the one hand, "*Dutch* stories" could indeed simply refer to the country of origin of these stories, which seems plausible given the flatness of the region and its being located at the sea. (I could, however, not find any contemporary source that blamed a flooding on a rat.) On the other hand, in Pope's age the expression "Dutch story" seems to have sometimes been used to refer to an unreliable, preposterous account. For instance, a brief notice in the newspaper *The Jesuite* (vol. 6, 12 Sept. 1719) relates that "both the Accounts of the Swedes being defeated, and the Moscovite Fleet by Sir John Norris, prove to be Dutch Stories, and are not to be depended upon" ("There is nothing more material from the North" 5).[226] Dennis Todd likewise draws attention to the contemporary mean-

which is only used in Scriblerus's notes and other paratexts, not in any of the unsigned annotations in the *Dunciad*s. The archaic verb forms (which also occur in the first half) are likewise mainly employed by Scriblerus throughout the *Dunciad*s. Nevertheless, there are several notes which are signed by Scriblerus in their entirety that quite obviously contain passages that cannot have been 'written' by him since they explicitly address and correct his explanations (see p. 60 above). If we assume that Scriblerus is indeed responsible for both of the contradictory halves, the question is why he presents both possibilities in the first place and whether he is being ironic in one of them. If we assume that Scriblerus and an unnamed other annotator are fighting over the meaning of the passage, we are left to wonder which of the two is more trustworthy and convincing.

226 There is yet another use of "Dutch story" in this sense in the same newspaper (vol. 3, 22 Aug. 1719): "We were amus'd, a few Days ago, with a Story from the Dutch Prints, That the King of Spain had made Overtures of Peace, whereby he would acknowledge the Duke of Orleans as Regent of France; The Pretender, for King of Scotland and Ireland; and King George, as King of England[.] [...] We need only say, 'tis a Dutch Story without taking

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ing of "Dutch story" and suggests that it might evoke the "English prejudice of the unremitting stupidity of the Dutch" (Todd 192).[227] The italicisation of "Dutch" in the note might further underpin the potential irony. If one follows this line of reasoning, the accounts of the threatening nature of the dunces may thus be just exaggerated, unreliable stories. Hence, the first part of the note is not as unequivocally pessimistic as it is made out to be by Williams, Erskine-Hill, and others (cf. A. L. Williams 59; Erskine-Hill, *Pope* 38–39).

The second part of the note, however, is not as unambiguously *optimistic* as it first seems. As outlined above, Scriblerus's enthusiastic praise of "the Diligence of our Schools, […] the Regularity of our Universities, the Discernment of our Great men", etc., though not *wholly* ironic, nevertheless contains a considerable degree of irony. Furthermore, his insistence that the mention of the ivory gate must indicate that Tibbald's vision is entirely unrealistic is, as we have seen, rendered doubtful by the later reference to the *Aeneid*. Thus, towards the end of the third book of 1729, "Pope seems compelled to draw out the ambiguity, not to resolve it" (Todd 191): Scriblerus's annotations can both be used to affirm that the dunces are harmless and that Tibbald's vision is untrue *and* to serve as a warning sign that there may be more truth to this vision than the reference to the ivory gate as the alleged origin of false dreams suggests.

2.3.4.2 The 1743 *Dunciad*: A More Pessimistic Work?

So much for the intricacies of the 1729 *Dunciad*. In the 1743 four-book version, all of the textual elements discussed so far are still present, though some are

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any further notice of it" ("We were amus'd, a few Days ago, with a Story from the Dutch Prints" 5).

I could also find two cases in which it is not entirely clear whether "Dutch Story" is used in this sense or in its literal meaning. The first occurs in Richard Claridge's 1714 *The Novelty and Nullity of Dissatisfaction*: in the passage, the author critically refers to another writer relating a story about the Prince of Orange and concludes that this writer "hath not told the whole Truth in this *Dutch Story*" (Claridge 59, original emphasis). The second case can be found in the anonymous 1710 *Both Sides Pleas'd: Or a Dialogue Between a Sacheverelite Parson and an Hoadlean Gentleman*. After the Hoadlean gentleman has related a Dutch anecdote about how even a minute disagreement can lead to widespread political polarisation, one of his interlocutors (seriously or ironically?) agrees with him and later goes on to ask the gentleman to "proceed where you left off by my Interruption, which hath occasioned the *Dutch* Story, whereby we have been diverted, and, at the same time, well inform'd of our Duty, in relation to our present unhappy Divisions" (*Both Sides Pleas'd* 9, original emphasis).

227 This contemporary meaning is also recorded in the *OED*. When used in compounds, "Dutch" can be employed "with an opprobrious or derisive application, largely due to the rivalry and enmity between the English and Dutch in the 17th cent." ("Dutch, *adj.*, *n.*1, and *adv.*" def. C.2.).

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slightly rephrased. These are complemented by the fourth book of the poem and the introduction of Bentley as yet another annotatorial persona. In the 1729 three-book version, the poem ends with a vision of the triumph of Dulness, Darkness, and Chaos. This is then followed by the information that this vision flies out of the ivory gate, by Scriblerus's note (seriously or ironically) claiming that this means that the vision was false, and by the note identifying the source passage in the *Aeneid.* In the 1743 *Dunciad*, the final victory of Dulness is not part of the vision in book three but is moved to the conclusion of the fourth book. The reference to the ivory gate and the two notes on it, however, remain appended to the end of the third book, which only recounts a few of Dulness's minor triumphs, like "Isis' [i.e. Oxford's] Elders reel, their pupils sport, / And Alma mater lie[s] dissolv'd in Port!" (*Dunciad* 3.337–38). Thus, instead of (at least potentially) qualifying the depiction of Dulness's supremacy, as they did in the 1729 version, now

> the reference to the 'Iv'ry Gate' and the explanatory notes [...] appear in a less crucial position, certainly not as a concluding implication to brighten and disrupt the 'Universal Darkness' which descends with Dulness's reign. (Deneau 211)[228]

As a consequence, Dulness's triumph seems to be depicted as a dark reality (rather than as a vision) and the dunces as her threatening, effective tools (cf. Deneau 209; Rawson, "The Sleep of the Dunces" 271–72; 280).[229] However, I

228 Similarly, Todd concludes that, in the 1743 version, Dulness's triumph "is not capped by a puzzling couplet that first dismisses and then affirms the threat; [...] it is no longer presented as the mad dream of Tibbald but now delivered directly by the speaker of the poem" (Todd 194).

229 However, another (seldomly discussed) possibility is that the whole fourth book is still part of Cibber's dream. In this case, the beginning of the fourth book ("Yet, yet a moment, one dim Ray of Light / Indulge, dread Chaos, and eternal Night") would either be spoken by the prophesising Settle or the listening Cibber instead of the poet persona/narrator (*Dunciad* 4.1–2). Settle or Cibber would thus try to detain the vision that, at the end of the third book, was depicted as flying though the ivory gate. This reading might be substantiated by Scriblerus's annotations which claim that the speaker of the lines is a "genuine Son" of Dulness and that he is a "dull Poet" (cf. *Dunciad* 4.1n; 4.4n). (Bentley's note on 4.4 contradicts Scriblerus and contends that the lines are supposed to be spoken by the author of the *Dunciad*s). McTague argues that having Cibber sleep throughout the fourth book would be a "way of connecting the new book with the preceding one" (McTague 195). Anther hint that the fourth book might still be part of Cibber's dream are the references to Dulness's curtain, which occur both at the very beginning of the third book (i.e. the commencement of the dream) and at the very end of the fourth book (i.e. the dream's possible conclusion) (cf. *Dunciad* 3.3; 4.655). If one assumes that the fourth book is indeed still part of Cibber's vision, the whole fourth book would be qualified by

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agree with Griffin in that that even the four-book *Dunciad* is not as uncompromisingly pessimistic as it is sometimes made out to be and that the "difference between the two versions may be less than has been imagined" (Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274). In what follows, I will consider the ambiguity of the questions whether the dunces are harmless or dangerous and whether Dulness really prevails at the end of the *Dunciad*s in the light of three new aspects added in the 1743 *Dunciad*: (1) the fact that Bentley directly contradicts Scriblerus's interpretation of the ivory gate, (2) an (unsigned) note on the fourth book that again stresses the non-threatening incompetence of the dunces, and (3) two notes by Bentley and Scriblerus that refer to the importance of the "mysteries" in the fourth book – a concept that is closely connected to William Warburton's (Pope's co-annotator in the 1743 *Dunciad*) interpretation of the ivory gate in the *Aeneid*.

Bentley vs. Scriblerus in 1743

As in the 1729 *Dunciad*, the beginning of the third book of the 1743 *Dunciad* describes how Dulness sends a vision to the sleeping king of the dunces – the only difference being that now this king is Cibber/Bays instead of Tibbald. And again, we are presented with Scriblerus's annotation explaining (seriously or ironically) that Cibber's vision is false because it eventually flees though the ivory gate. This explanation, however, is denigrated by Bentley, who adds a note of his own: "How much the good Scriblerus was mistaken, may be seen from the Fourth book, which, it is plain from hence, he had never seen. – Bent." (*Dunciad* 3.5–6n).[230] Pope here facetiously alludes to the publication history of the *Dunciad*s, the first three books of which had been published in 1728 – fourteen years prior to the separate publication of the fourth book in 1742. In Bentley's eyes, Scriblerus had annotated a faulty and incomplete version of the *Dunciad*s because he was oblivious to the existence of the fourth book, which – as the fabrication goes – had lately been "found merely by accident, in taking a survey of the *Library* of a late eminent nobleman" (*Dunciad* 375,

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the reference to the ivory gate through which this vision is sent. If one decides to read the ivory gate as the origin of false chimaeras, the whole vision presented in the fourth book would be nullified.

230 It is a bit strange to suppose that Scriblerus had never seen the fourth book, given that it is full of annotations by him. (His annotations also appear in the separately published 1742 fourth book of the poem). Either Pope and Warburton simply neglected the alleged publication and editing history of the *Dunciad*s in order to be able to pit Scriblerus and Bentley against each other in the fourth book as well, or this is a hint that Bentley is just plainly wrong in his annotation.

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original emphasis). According to Bentley, thus, there is only one authentic and complete version of Pope's satire, namely the four-book *Dunciad*. However, readers knew, of course, that most of the 1728 and 1729 editions were authentic as well (the only non-authentic ones being pirate copies) – 'authentic' here meaning that their publication was sanctioned by the author and, hence, that they included everything he wanted them to include at these points in time.

But even though Bentley is incorrect in insisting that only the four-book version should be regarded as the 'real *Dunciad*', his note raises a valid point: the fourth book *does* prove Scriblerus wrong because it depicts Dulness's triumph and (apart from one exception, see below) does not provide any information that would induce readers to question her victory. What does this tell us about the veracity of Scriblerus's annotation in the 1729 *Dunciad*? Does it mean that he had been wrong all along, that readers should have ridiculed rather than credited his note on the ivory gate even before Bentley contradicted it? And, as a consequence, does it mean that, despite Scriblerus's protestations to the contrary, Dulness had already triumphed in the 1729 version? If we answer these question in the affirmative, the three-book *Dunciad* is retrospectively disambiguated by the four-book *Dunciad.*

But there are two other possibilities: firstly, the note might suggest that it is still ambiguous whether Scriblerus was correct for the 1729 *Dunciad*, even though Bentley is definitely right for the 1743 one. As stated above, readers knew that both the three-book and the four-book *Dunciad*s were authentic and that, at least until 1742 (when the fourth book was published separately), the three-book *Dunciad*s were by no means incomplete. One might argue that Scriblerus's 1729 note cannot be judged on the basis of a text that would only be published more than a decade later. In this case, the ambiguity of the 1729 *Dunciad* would remain unresolved, whereas the 1743 *Dunciad* would not contain any ambiguity with respect to Dulness's triumph. Following this reading, the triumph in the 1743 version is real.

Secondly, it is possible that Bentley may simply be wrong about his interpretation of the fourth book. After all, as shown above, he had proposed other misleading interpretations throughout his annotations. Neither should it be forgotten that he carries the name of a man Pope wanted to ridicule. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the next section, there is an unsigned annotation towards the end of the fourth book that calls into question Dulness's triumph and the power of the dunces. Even in the 1743 version, hence, it might to some extent be ambiguous whether readers should follow Bentley's annotation on the ivory gate or Scriblerus's (if we read the latter's as serious rather than ironic) – there are contradictory textual elements that partly support, partly undermine each of their interpretations.

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A Glimpse of Hope?

One textual element that supports Scriblerus's argument that the dunces are harmless and that Dulness will never triumph occurs, paradoxically, in the fourth book, i.e. the one that – according to Bentley – unambiguously describes Dulness's victory. Towards the end of Dulness's speech to her votaries, in which she describes various kinds of duncery, the following unsigned annotation is appended:

> This speech of Dulness to her Sons at parting may possibly fall short of the Reader's expectation; who may imagine the Goddess might give them a Charge of more consequence, and, from such a Theory as is before delivered, incite them to the practice of something more extraordinary, than to personate Running-Footmen, Jockeys, Stage Coachmen, *etc*.
>
> But if it be well consider'd, that whatever inclination they might have to do mischief, her sons are generally render'd harmless by their Inability; and that it is the common effect of Dulness (even in her greatest efforts) to defeat her own design; the Poet, I am persuaded will be justified, and it will be allow'd that these worthy persons, in their several ranks, do as much as can be expected from them. (*Dunciad* 4.584n)[231]

Just like the (serious or ironic) second half of the note about the 'Dutch rats' (3.337–38 in the 1729 *Dunciad*; 3.333n in the 1743 version), this annotation reassures readers that the dunces are too incompetent to ever pose a serious threat. Should readers take this note seriously and assume that, even without the mention of the ivory gate at the very end of the poem, the final depiction of Dulness's triumph is just a chimaera? Or must this note be read as ironical due to its being contradicted by Bentley's note and by the ending of the *Dunciad*s, which depicts how Dulness's "dread Empire, Chaos! is restor'd" and "Universal Darkness buries All"? In any case, the annotation shows that Bentley's refutation of Scriblerus's note should not necessarily be taken at face value and that even the 1743 *Dunciad* is more ambiguous about its apparent pessimism than many scholars have so far allowed for.[232]

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231 The note appeared as early as in the 1742 separate publication of the fourth book (cf. 1742 *Dunciad* 4.574n). In the posthumous 1751 edition prepared by Warburton, it is attributed to both Pope and Warburton. This note is not taken into account by Deneau, who, as a consequence, seems to slightly overstate the pessimism of the 1743 *Dunciad.*

232 One of the few scholars who pays attention to this note is George Atkins, who likewise sees it as instrumental in bringing about the ambiguity of the *Dunciad*s (cf. Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 162). Griffin also discusses it in the context of ambiguity and balances it against some of the notes (e.g. *Dunciad* 3.333 on the "*Dutch* stories"), that partly serve to suggest the opposite, i.e. that the dunces are indeed dangerous (cf. Griffin, *Alexander Pope* 274). Furthermore, Todd argues that "in the 1743 *Dunciad* [Pope] takes the conflicting terms of his ambiguity, forces them further apart and articulates them more radically, and

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Pope's Ivory Gate and Warburton's Eleusinian Mysteries

Then again, the 1743 four-book *Dunciad* features two annotations that (at least implicitly) call into question the interpretation of the ivory gate as the origin of mere chimaeras and suggest that, after all, the dreams that come through this gate are true. One of them appears at the beginning of the fourth book, where a note signed by Bentley explains that

> the Author in this work had indeed a *deep Intent*; there were in it *Mysteries* or ἀπόῤῥητα [aporreta] which he durst not fully reveal, and doubtless in divers verses (according to *Milton*) 'more is meant than meets the ear.' – Bent. (*Dunciad* 4.4n, original emphasis)

The other note which calls into question Scriblerus's (serious or ironic) insistence that Cibber's/Tibbald's dream is completely false is, paradoxically, signed by Scriblerus himself. Occurring towards the end of the fourth book – right before the poem starts to describe how Dulness showers her votaries with various 'gifts' and tells them how they shall serve her cause – the note explains that

> [h]ere beginneth the celebration of the *greater Mysteries* of the Goddess, which the Poet in his Invocation ver. 5. promised to sing. For when now each Aspirant, as was the custom, had proved his qualification and claim to a participation, the High-Priest of Dulness first initiateth the Assembly[.] [...] [B]eing enriched with so many various Gifts and Graces, *Initiation* into the Mysteries was anciently, as well as in these our times, esteemed a necessary qualification for every high office and employment, whether in Church or State. [...] It is to be observed that Dulness, before this her Restoration, had her Pontiffs *in Partibus*; who from time to time held her Mysteries in secret, and with great privacy. But now, on her Re-establishment, she celebrateth them, like those of the *Cretans* (the most ancient of all Mysteries) in open day, and offereth them to the inspection of all men. – Scribl. (*Dunciad* 4.517n, original emphasis)

At first sight, these notes have nothing to do with the ivory gate and only little with the veracity of Dulness's triumph. (Only the ending of Scriblerus's note

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thus converts the confusion of his conflicting responses into a full paradox" (Todd 193). Siebert uses this unsigned note to underpin his argument that "the dunces [are] being humiliated and exposed, again and again", even though he also concedes that "the notes sometimes lead one to take the dunces more seriously" (Siebert, "Cibber and Satan" 211).

Rawson even sees the 1743 *Dunciad* as more light-hearted than the three-book *Dunciad*s: "the change of hero from Theobald to Cibber in *1743* made it in some ways harder to sustain a feeling of diabolical menace than in the original version. The portrayal of Cibber, both in the verse, and especially in the prose commentary, is more that of a hyperactive but harmless busybody, than of an agent, or harbinger, of catastrophic intellectual corruption" (Rawson, "The Sleep of the Dunces" 276, original emphasis).

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suggests that Dulness is indeed victorious, thereby contradicting his two notes on the ivory gate.) However, readers who were familiar with Warburton's 1738 first volume of *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* could detect a further meaning in these notes. In this book, Pope's later co-annotator dedicates a whole section to ancient mysteries (i.e. religious ceremonies of celebration and initiation) and interprets the ending of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* in the context of such mysteries (cf. Warburton, book 2, section 4 *passim*).[233] As Warburton explains,

> [e]ach of the *pagan* Gods had (besides the *public* and *open*) a *secret* worship paid unto him; to which none were admitted but those who had been selected by preparatory ceremonies, called INITIATION. This *secret worship* was termed the MYSTERIES. (Warburton 193, original emphasis and capitalisation)

These mysteries were kept secret in order to "excite curiosity" and had "*hidden* doctrines, which went under the common name of ΑΠΟΡΡΗΤΑ" (Warburton 200; 203, original emphasis and capitalisation). Such ἀπόῤῥητα (*aporreta*) are referred to in Bentley's annotation for 4.4 as being sprinkled throughout the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s.

As far as Scriblerus's note is concerned, his distinction between lesser and greater mysteries can likewise be found in Warburton's study, more specifically in his description of the Eleusinian mysteries. The Eleusinian mysteries, as the contemporary *Cyclopaedia, or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* explains, were "the most solemn and sacred ceremonies in use among the Greeks […] The matter of these mysteries […] was an imitation, or representation of what mythologists teach of Ceres" (Chambers, "Eleusinia"). The lesser of these Eleusinian mysteries, according to Warburton, served the "Institutor's intention to invite the people into them" and were "a kind of preparatory purification for the *Greater*" (Warburton 201, original emphasis). These greater mysteries were concerned with a "*future state of rewards and punishments*"; they were only disclosed to the chosen few and were designed to keep "some truths from the people's knowledge" (Warburton 224; 201, original emphasis).

233 Warburton's *Divine Legation* was immensely successful; "few English books in the eighteenth century attracted more general and immediate attention" (Evans 52; cf. Ben-Tov 213). Hence, it is likely that many readers of the 1743 *Dunciad* would have known Warburton's thoughts on Virgil's use of the ivory gate. For a summary of Warburton's main arguments, see Evans 53–62. The importance of the *Divine Legation* for the 1743 *Dunciad* is at length discussed in chapter four of Brooks-Davies's *Pope's Dunciad and the Queen of Night*. For the historical and religious background of Pope's and Warburton's allusions to the mysteries, also see Howard, "The Mystery of the Cibberian *Dunciad*". Howard does not, however, discuss Warburton's reading of the *Aeneid* in the context of the mysteries.

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Against this backdrop, Scriblerus's note suggests that the first five hundred lines of the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s are merely concerned with the lesser mysteries of Dulness, i.e. with her non-secretive, public worship.[234] During these lesser mysteries, the various classes of dunces (textual critics, schoolmasters, pedants, rakes, patrons, collectors, deists, etc.) describe how they are serving Dulness's cause. After having provided sufficient proof of their "qualification and claim to a participation", the dunces are then initiated into her hidden greater mysteries (*Dunciad* 4.517n). As Scriblerus tells us, now that Dulness has triumphed, even her greater mysteries can be celebrated "in open day, and [be offered] to the inspection of all men"; her adherents "in Church or State" do not have to conceal her secrets from the uninitiated any longer (*Dunciad* 4.517n).

While Warburton's *Divine Legation* sheds some light on the references to the 'mysteries' made in Scriblerus's and Bentley's notes, it is even more important for its discussion of the ending of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. Warburton ridicules ancient and modern commentators who argue that since Aeneas leaves the underworld through the ivory gate his vision is only a fanciful chimaera (cf. Warburton 279–80). Instead, according to him, Aeneas's return through the ivory gate only signals that he did not really descend into the underworld, *not* that his visions were false. Rather, the sixth book is "an enigmatical representation of his INITIATION INTO THE MYSTERIES" (Warburton 245, original capitalisation). Aeneas's visions are not incorrect *per se*; instead, they refer to the "*shadowy* representations" of his "own fortune and affairs" that are shown to him during the celebration of these mysteries (Warburton 280; 277, original emphasis). Warburton goes on to explain that – even though these visions were only representative – "the ivory gate itself was *real.* It appears, indeed, to be no other than the sumptuous door of the temple [of Ceres], through which the *Initiated* came out, when the *celebration* was over" (Warburton 281, original emphasis). Warburton argues that Aeneas here represents emperor Augustus and that the sixth book of the *Aeneid* is meant to communicate that the emperor himself had been "initiated into the ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES" (Warburton 246, original capitalisation): he had entered the temple of Ceres,

234 It is possible that the first three books can also be seen as part of the celebrations of Dulness's lesser mysteries. In this case, the reference to the lesser and greater mysteries might suggest that, while Dulness's untalented hack-writers and dubious booksellers had always been allowed to act in the open (celebrating her lesser mysteries), her votaries among scholars, politicians, aristocrats, and divines had until now been forced to serve her cause "in secret, and with great privacy" (*Dunciad* 4.517n).

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learnt the secrets of her worship, seen a staging of his "own fortune and affairs", and left the temple through its ivory gate.[235]

Following Warburton's interpretation of the *Aeneid*, the third book of the *Dunciad*s would thus not describe Tibbald/Cibber as having a dream but as entering the temple of Dulness, being presented with a show of his own and others' (actual) feats in her name, being told about her secret doctrines or ἀπόῤῥητα, and leaving Dulness's temple through its ivory gate. In this case, the glimpse Tibbald/Cibber gets of Dulness's victory would not be a chimaera. Instead, it would be an allegorical but correct representation of her past and current triumphs. As a consequence, this interpretation promotes a pessimistic reading of the *Dunciad*s in which Dulness indeed conquers the world and in which the dunces pose a real threat to culture, religion, and science. Given that, according to Warburton, Aeneas merely serves as a representation of Augustus, this reading also suggests that, instead of Tibbald/Cibber, it is actually George II who is being admitted into the inner circle of Dulness's disciples.[236]

It is not clear whether this possible interpretation is only applicable to the 1743 *Dunciad* or also to the 1729 *Dunciad*. The 1729 *Dunciad* was, of course, published nearly a decade before Warburton's book. However, as Brooks-Davies points out, "all Warburton did, in effect, was to reinterpret existing material on the Eleusinian mysteries" (Brooks-Davies 125). Thus, at least some readers in 1729 might have arrived at a similar interpretation of the ivory gate as Warburton and, as a consequence, rejected Scriblerus's assertion that Tibbald's vision is downright wrong. Nevertheless, this possibility is only very implicit in the 1729 version and is never alluded to in the work itself.[237]

As we have seen, this completely changes in the 1743 *Dunciad*. The "Advertisement to the Reader" made Pope's audience aware of his collaboration with Warburton, and both Bentley's and Scriblerus's notes allude to Warburton's discussion of the lesser and greater Eleusinian mysteries, even if they never *directly* refer to it. For readers who knew Warburton's (very successful and controversial) work, all of this contributes to the impression that,

235 Most modern Virgil scholars have either ignored or contradicted Warburton's reading of the *Aeneid*. For an exception, see Luck, "Virgil and the Mystery Religions". One thing Warburton is definitely right about is that Augustus had indeed been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries (cf. Poletti 558; Luck 151). Whether the sixth book of the *Aeneid* really describes this initiation is up for debate.

236 For George II being ironically compared to Augustus, also see Pope's *First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*. For George II as the true 'hero' of the *Dunciad*s, see Keener 53.

237 One exception may be found in the argument to the first book, which explains that Dulness "initiates [Tibbald] into her mysteries" (1729 *Dunciad* 169).

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at least in the 1743 version, Cibber's vision is trustworthy and Dulness indeed eventually conquers the world. The two annotations on the mysteries thus contradict Scriblerus's interpretation of the ivory gate as the origin of false visions and substantiate Bentley's objection to Scriblerus's note at the beginning of the third book (i.e. *Dunciad* 3.5–6n).[238]

Still, there are yet again two factors which complicate a straightforward reading of the notes that refer to the celebration of Dulness's mysteries. For one, as we have seen in the course of this chapter, nothing that is uttered by Bentley or Scriblerus can simply be taken at face value, and there are no other (unsigned) notes to support their annotations that relate Dulness's triumph to the Eleusinian mysteries.[239] Here again, the fundamental ambiguity of these two personas (as relates to their intelligence and – in Scriblerus's case – use of irony) raises the question whether their interpretation of the *Dunciad*s can be trusted. They could indeed be employed as Pope's serious mouthpieces here, or Scriblerus could be ironic about his assertions, or they could be set up to be ridiculed for earnestly proposing such a reading. (To further complicate the matter, Scriblerus's allusion to the Eleusinian mysteries seems to be contradicting his earlier interpretation of the poem, i.e. that Dulness will never triumph).

What further undermines Scriblerus's and Bentley's insistence that the *Dunciad*s contain allusions to the Eleusinian mysteries is that, slightly later, Scriblerus misunderstands a passage that is merely concerned with the intricacies of French cooking, arguing that it must be yet another reference to mysterious religious celebrations. In the note, after having recounted all the ancient sources he searched in order to make sense of the passage, he concludes that it describes "some mysterious superstitious Rite, as it is said to be done by a *Priest*, and soon after called a *Sacrifice*, attended (as all ancient

238 It is noteworthy that Bentley does not mention Warburton's interpretation of the ivory gate in the note when he denigrates Scriblerus's interpretation of the third book (3.5–6n), given that it would perfectly corroborate his argument. By remaining rather implicit about his reference to Warburton's book, Pope seems to be differentiating between readerships (in this case between those who had read Warburton's *Divine Legation* or at least generally knew the claim that Aeneas's descent into the underworld refers to the Eleusinian mysteries and those who did not). Depending on their knowledge or ignorance of Warburton's book (or this general interpretative approach to the *Aeneid*), the passage could mean one thing or another. The fact that one note can have different meanings for different audiences is important for one of Pope's manipulated annotations (chapter 2.2.2.3) and is also discussed in more detail with respect to Byron's annotations (chapter 3.2.2).

239 This is not meant to suggest that all unsigned annotations in the *Dunciad*s should be taken at face value. However, as I have shown throughout this chapter, the notes signed by Bentley and Scriblerus have a special propensity for being ironic or incorrect, or at least for being ambiguous with respect to their seriousness and accuracy.

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sacrifices were) with *Libation* and *Song*" (*Dunciad* 4.553n, original emphasis). An unsigned note on the same passage ridicules Scriblerus's interpretation. Does this annotation hint at the fact that Scriblerus is prone to incorrectly (or ironically) relating passages in the *Dunciad*s to ancient religious mysteries? Or is it only yet another example of him being sensible in one annotation and absurd in another? As it happens so often in the *Dunciad*s, the matter cannot be resolved: the context of the Eleusinian mysteries is rather subtly introduced and used to emphasise the danger posed by the dunces, and it is just as subtly undermined, which again casts doubt on the veracity of Dulness's triumph.

Scriblerus, Bentley, and the Global Ambiguity of the Dunciad*s*

When discussing the potential danger of Dulness and her dunces, Maynard Mack suggest that it is the juxtaposition of bathetic and epic passages in the *Dunciad*s that helps Pope "keep to the end the tension between all these creatures as comic and ridiculous and their destructive potentiality in being so" (Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope'" 39). As I have shown, another factor that complicates this issue is the intricate combination of a multitude of ambiguous textual elements (most of which occur in notes signed by Bentley or Scriblerus) that address the question whether or not the dunces pose a serious threat and whether or not Dulness's triumph is real. Both in the 1729 and the 1743 *Dunciad*s, it is impossible to disambiguate these hints to arrive at a conclusive reading; the mutually exclusive possibilities "face each other like mirrors, producing endless vistas of irony qualified by irony, incapable of any final resolution" (Todd 192; cf. also Deneau 211; Atkins, *Quests of Difference* 159).

Interpretations that try to disambiguate these textual elements – either by suggesting that Pope is being ironical when he stresses the threat posed by the dunces or by asserting that he is being ironical when he emphasises their harmlessness – cannot live up to the fascinating complexity of the *Dunciad*s. Rather, one way of coming to terms with the contradictory statements regarding the dunces' power is to argue that "Pope was ambivalent in his attitude toward the Dunces" and portrayed them sometimes as dangerous monsters, sometimes as harmless fools, in order to express this ambivalence (Todd 178). Moreover, the various interpretations brought forward, contradicted, and ambiguated throughout Bentley's and Scriblerus's notes (and a few other sections of the text) can be seen as part of Pope's cat-and-mouse-game with his audience, in which he, time and again, playfully complicates readerly responses to the poem. Thus, the continuous ambiguation (often achieved through apparent disambiguation) both serves as a serious statement that it is impossible to assess the true danger posed by the dunces and as a facetious way of counteracting readers' longing for clarity and of undermining

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the annotations as alleged means of disambiguation. The repeated ambiguations, apparent disambiguations, and re-ambiguations can also be seen as tongue-in-cheek safety mechanisms: it is obvious that the *Dunciad*s ridicule contemporary artists, scholars, and politicians, and that Scriblerus's (serious or ironic) praises of modern culture are at least partly ironic on Pope's side. In denying the satirical bite, Pope only affirms it all the more. Furthermore, Pope's constant back-and-forth on the question of the dunces' dangerousness also raises the question what kind of satire the *Dunciad*s really are: are they concerned with spitefully harassing incompetent but ultimately harmless people, or are they noble attacks against the dangerous enemies of culture, learning, and integrity? The ambiguity of the threat posed by the dunces hence also ambiguates the morality and justification of the *Dunciad*s as a whole: are they merely targeted at minor aesthetic shortcomings or at serious menaces to society? This, in turn, is closely related to Pope's ambiguous self-presentation as both high-minded satirist and witty, amoral libeller (also see chapters 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.4). As I have shown, all of these strategies strongly rely on the fact that in many cases it is not clear which stance Pope adopts towards Bentley and Scriblerus in the annotations signed by them: does he speak though them, does he ridicule them, or does he do both of these things at the same time?

Conclusion

James McLaverty has correctly argued that Scriblerus's contribution to the *Dunciad*s "merits a full-length study" (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 99). The same can be said for Bentley. Though being far from a full-length study, this chapter has shown the complexity of these two personas as well as why the way in which we interpret their notes and other paratexts is of such central importance to our reading of the *Dunciad*s as a whole. For each of their individual contributions, readers have to decide whether Bentley and/or Scriblerus are to be seen as intelligent or stupid, serious or ironical, Pope's spokesmen or the victims of his satire. In cases in which Pope's own attitude towards Scriblerus's and Bentley's comments is not at all clear, these questions have ramifications for the meaning of the annotated passages and often even for the *Dunciad*s in their entirety. And while readers of the earlier versions of the *Dunciad*s 'only' had to decide whether or not they should follow Scriblerus's interpretations, after 1742 they were also confronted with Bentley directly calling into question Scriblerus's arguments, thus also having to resolve which (if either) of the two personas is more trustworthy. Though the annotations by Scriblerus and Bentley mainly serve intratextual purposes (i.e. ambiguating certain passages and the *Dunciad*s as a whole), they are also employed for socio-pragmatic aims like engaging readers in a complex guessing-game, satirising textual critics like

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Bentley and Hearne, and ambiguating Pope's self-presentation as well as his assumed attitude towards the reality he is depicting (does it induce despondency or laughter?).

Many notes by Bentley and Scriblerus ridicule the dunces even further, introduce surprising jokes and twists, and sometimes provide helpful explanations. All of these functions could very well have been performed by unsigned annotations, but Pope chose to attribute them to these two personas. Likewise, the annotations in which two contradictory approaches to textual criticism are promoted could have simply been signed by two different critics who actually supported one of these approaches, e.g. Hearne and Theobald. Instead, both contradictory types of notes were signed by Scriblerus. And Bentley, who was known by readers to be Pope's enemy, could have been portrayed as a complete dunce who constantly misinterprets the poem and never says anything sensible. Instead, even he was allowed to put forward a few (potentially) reasonable arguments. In other words, the ambiguity of Scriblerus and Bentley is deliberate and strategic, and it is calculated to render a straightforward interpretation of the *Dunciad*s impossible. One might even go so far as to argue that it was precisely this ambiguity that made Scriblerus so popular among later satirists (see p. 80 above): a highly flexible character, he could be used as an inept fool, an insightful observer, a clever ironist, or – as in Pope's case – as all three of them.

2.4 Mimicking Evaluative Notes in the *Dunciad*s: Defence or Mock-Defence?

Even though today's xenographic scholarly annotators rarely feel obliged to vindicate the author or text they are commenting on, Kristine Haugen points out that there was a long tradition

> demanding that a literary commentator act not only as his author's exegete but also as his apologist and defender against all comers. Beginning with the remarkable exertions of Homer's and Vergil's commentators in late antiquity, praise and (where necessary) justification were the critic's central idioms, whether the actual question at hand concerned a poem's style, meter, plot, or historical or mythological accuracy. (Haugen 227)[240]

240 However, Haugen also names a few exceptions, namely Zoilus, J. C. Scaliger, and Richard Bentley, who were very fond of criticising the authors they were editing (cf. Haugen 227). For various strategies that commentators used to defend their authors, see Stadeler, *Horazrezeption in der Renaissance*, esp. chapters 4 and 5.

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In the commentary on his *Iliad* translation, Pope himself often follows this tradition and defends Homer against existing or expected criticisms. To quote only one example, he explains that

> [t]his Passage, where *Agamemnon* takes away that *Trojan*'s Life whom *Menelaus* had pardoned, and is not blamed by *Homer* for so doing, must be ascribed to the uncivilized Manners of those Times, when Mankind was not united by the Bonds of a rational Society, and is not therefore to be imputed to the Poet, who followed Nature as it was in his Days. The Historical Books of the Old Testament abound in Instances of the like Cruelty to conquer'd Enemies. (Pope, *Iliad* 6.57n)

In what follows, I will analyse two annotations on the *Dunciad*s in which Pope appears – at least at first sight – to be defending his own poem against anticipated objections.[241] I will show that both notes are phrased in such equivocal terms as to make readers wonder what kind of annotation they are actually confronted with: one that genuinely defends the text or one that gloats over the very elements that readers may object to, thereby drawing attention to and reinforcing the offensiveness of the passage. Thus, the two annotations are prime examples of Pope's strategic production of the 'ambiguity of ambiguity' for satirical purposes: they make readers wonder whether the additional, more dangerous meaning of a passage was intended by the author or whether they are simply reading too much into the text.

In the first example, this ambiguity of ambiguity as well as the note's double function mainly rely on a multitude of referential ambiguities that appear in the annotation. In the second case, readers are presented with three justifications for the passage that can either be interpreted as serious or as ironic. In both annotations, it is impossible to resolve the ambiguities. And in both of them, these ambiguities give rise to new ambiguities concerning, for example, Pope's self-presentation, the exact target of his satire, and the alleged moral aim of his poem.

2.4.1 *Corrupt Clergymen and Underspecification*

Being a Catholic, Pope made himself vulnerable to accusations of 'papist propaganda', sedition, and treason whenever he published a passage that dealt with religion or that could at least be construed as doing so. He even poked fun at his critics' readiness to bring forward such allegations in his pseudonymously published *A Key to the Lock. Or, a Treatise Proving, Beyond all Contradiction, the Dangerous Tendency of a Late Poem, Entituled, The Rape of*

241 Annotations that anticipate objections are also discussed in Genette 326; Pfersmann, "Espace public, notes personnelles" 116–17; and F. Robertson 149.

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the Lock, to Government and Religion (1715). The note that I will discuss here is appended to a passage in the 1743 four-book *Dunciad* that – unlike *The Rape of the Lock* – indeed seems to contain highly dangerous religious sentiments.[242]

> And Milbourn chief, deputed by the rest,
> Gave him [Smedley] the cassock, surcingle, and vest.
> 'Receive (he said) these robes which once were mine,
> Dulness is sacred in a sound divine.'
> He ceas'd, and spread the robe; the crowd confess
> The rev'rend Flamen in his lengthen'd dress.
> Around him wide a sable Army stand,
> A low-born, cell-bred, selfish, servile band,
> Prompt or to guard or stab, to saint or damn,
> Heav'n's Swiss, who fight for any God, or Man. (*Dunciad* 2.349–358)

The first six lines are a slight revision of the 1728 and 1729 texts, whereas the last four lines were only added in 1743 (cf. 1728 *Dunciad* 2.313–18; 1729 *Dunciad* 2.325–30). What is risky about these new lines is that they could be read as an insult against all churchmen, or – even more dangerously – against the Protestant clergy in particular. The two men referred to by name in the passage, Luke Milbourn and Jonathan Smedley, were both Protestants, though widely divergent with respect to their political and religious views: Milbourn opposed the dissenters and was associated with the Anglican High Church and Toryism, whereas Smedley was a Whig, a champion of the dissenting churches against the Church of England, and a supporter of House Hanover (cf. S. A. Brown 105; Seccombe and Barnard 990).

While both men ridiculed in these lines are Protestants, the description of the "sable Army" that surrounds them is underspecified with respect to the denomination(s) that it refers to. The expression "cell-bred" is still rather straightforward, suggesting monasteries and hence Catholicism (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.355n). The term "servile", however, can be read in a multitude of ways (ibid.). For one, it can be interpreted as a general attack against clergymen of either denomination who ingratiate themselves with the mighty. More specifically, however, Protestant clerics needed a patron to obtain a living in a parish and the favour of the monarch to be raised to a bishopric, while Catholic

242 The note on this passage was most likely written by Warburton rather than Pope himself (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.355n). The authorship of the note, however, is not relevant to my interpretation of it, especially since Warburton's part in the annotation was only made public in 1751. The first readers of the note would hence have believed that it had been authored by Pope. If the attribution to Warburton is correct, it is remarkable that he, who usually strove to prove the orthodoxy of Pope's writings, would write such an equivocal and potentially dangerous note.

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clergymen in Britain depended on families to keep them as chaplains (ibid.; cf. Chapin 417–18). "Servile" might furthermore allude to the alleged connection between Catholicism and absolutism (e.g. under Charles I, James II, and the French monarchs) or to Catholic reliance on authorities rather than scripture.[243] Next, the line "Heav'n's Swiss, who fight for any God, or Man" can be read as an attack against renegades and opportunists among both denominations. Nevertheless, it might also be an allusion to the Swiss Guard, thus directly attacking the Catholic church. Conversely, as Rumbold suggests, the line is also a rather overt echo of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther*, in which Dryden calls French Protestant clergymen emigrating to Britain "[t]hose *Swisses* [who] fight on any side for pay" (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.358, original emphasis).[244]

From the passage itself, hence, it does not become clear which denomination is the main target of the vituperation. All three options (general attack, attack against Catholics, attack against Protestants) are rather dangerous for Pope: he risks alienating his Catholic coreligionists, who could read the lines as being mainly insulting to their own creed, but he also risks confirming his enemies' view of himself as a treacherous, anti-Protestant Catholic with Tory-leanings and several openly Jacobitical friends.[245] The more general third reading, i.e. that the passage denigrates clergymen in general, is likewise detrimental to Pope's otherwise moral and devout self-presentation (e.g. in the *Moral Essays*, the *Essay on Man*, and to some extent the fourth book of the *Dunciad*s).[246]

243 As Clement Fatovic notes, "[s]ince at least the beginning of the seventeenth century, Roman Catholicism has been closely identified [by the British] with various forms of despotism, both foreign and domestic", and "[t]he frequent association of popery with 'tyranny' and 'arbitrary government' made Catholicism in religion and politics virtually synonymous with 'servility,' 'slavery,' and 'subjection'" (Fatovic 39; 40).

244 The lines in *The Hind and the Panther* read: "Think you your new *French Proselytes* are come / To starve abroad, because they starv'd at home? / Your benefices twinckl'd from afar, / They found the new *Messiah* by the star: / Those *Swisses* fight on any side for pay, / And 'tis the living that conforms, not they" (Dryden, *Works* 3: 3.173–179, original emphasis).

245 As Rumbold points out in her note on this annotation, Pope had earlier indeed drawn criticism from other Catholics for the following lines in his *Essay on Criticism:* "Thus *Wit*, like *Faith*, by each man is apply'd / To *one small Sect*, and All are *damn'd* beside" (*TE* 1: ll. 396–97, original emphasis). For his defence against this criticism, see his letters to John Caryll, *Corr.* 1: 118 and 1: 126–28 (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.355n).

246 For a discussion of Pope's different, often even contradictory, literary approaches to religion, see Connell, *Secular Chains*, chapter 6.

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The annotation anchored in line 355 ("Around him wide …") at first sight appears to disavow the risky tendencies of the passage:

> It is to be hoped that the satyr in these lines will be understood in the confined sense in which the Author meant it, of such only of the Clergy, who, tho' solemnly engaged in the service of Religion, dedicate themselves for venal and corrupt ends to that of Ministers or Factions; and tho' educated under an entire ignorance of the world, aspire to interfere in the government of it, and, consequently, to disturb and disorder it; in which they fall short only of their Predecessors, when invested with a larger share of power and authority, which they employed indifferently (as is hinted at in the lines above) either in supporting arbitrary power, or in exciting rebellion; in canonizing the vices of Tyrants, or in blackening the virtues of Patriots; in corrupting religion by superstition, or betraying it by libertinism, as either was thought best to serve the ends of Policy, or flatter the follies of the Great. (*Dunciad* 2.355n)

The note claims that the lines by no means attack all clergymen but only those (of any denomination) who interfere with politics. It does not straightforwardly name any specific persons or incidents; thus, one way in which the note can be interpreted is that the passage contains innocent, generalised satire without any particular political or religious group in mind.

Nevertheless, like the annotated lines themselves, the annotation uses a number of underspecified but highly charged expressions – both with regard to politics and religion. These expressions suggest that the attack is directed against very specific targets after all, while at the same time making a conclusive identification of these targets impossible. In doing so, the annotation raises two questions. First, which contemporary religious group does Pope mainly accuse of meddling with politics? And, second, who exactly does he mean by the "Predecessors" that are said to be even worse than their modern heirs in this respect? Furthermore, the manner in which some of these past incidents involving the "Predecessors" are described suggests that they actually refer to the current political situation, thereby introducing a hint of topical satire that is almost entirely absent from the annotated lines themselves.

The first expression that is underspecified with respect to its referent criticises clergymen who are serving "Ministers or Factions". In Pope's time, it was almost impossible not to interpret "Minister" as Robert Walpole,[247] but the

247 See, for instance, the article in the opposition newspaper *The Craftsman* (no. 142, 22 Mar. 1729), which disingenuously wonders about the fact that one cannot refer to any historical "*wicked Minister*" without one's enemies reading it as an allusion to Walpole ("I find that nothing gives your Adversaries more Offence or Uneasiness" 1, original emphasis; cf. also Lund 259).

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satirist could, theoretically, still claim innocence and pretend that it refers to any high-profile politician. Hence, the criticism might either be generalised or primarily directed at those Protestant clergymen who support the (Protestant) Minister Walpole and, as a consequence, his Whig party as well as the (Protestant) Hanoverian dynasty he serves. The term "Faction" can theoretically point to any party or side, thus attacking both those churchmen who are loyal to the Whigs and those who follow the Tories, both those who are allied with House Stuart and those supporting House Hanover. However, the term also has a more specific meaning, namely "[a]n organized dissenting group within a larger one, especially in politics or religion", (*OED*, "faction, *n.1.*" def. 2.a.). In the Augustan age, the Dissenters usually supported the Whigs and Low Church Anglicanism (cf. J. E. Bradley 99). Henry Sacheverell's famous anti-Dissenter sermon *The Perils of False Brethren* (1709), for instance, depicts them as the mortal enemies of Toryism and the High Church. Dissenters were also sometimes associated with Puritanism (cf. Thompson 265–66). All things taken together, the expression "Ministers or Factions" can be read as generalised satire against all churchmen who meddle with politics, but it strongly evokes Protestants and, as a consequence, those serving the Whigs and House Hanover.

The charge that contemporary clergymen "aspire to interfere in the government of [the world], and, consequently, to disturb and disorder it" is again rather unspecific. Depending on one's political and religious leanings (or, rather, the leanings one assumes Pope to have), one can read this phrase in two ways: (1) as a reference to the (mainly Catholic) Jacobites who had tried to reinstate the Stuart family several times in Pope's lifetime, e.g. in the uprising of 1715 and the 1721/1722 Atterbury Plot, which was devised by Pope's close friend Francis Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester; or (2) as an allusion to Protestants, who supported the – in the eyes of Jacobites – usurping Hanoverians as well as the slightly earlier anti-Catholic Glorious Revolution. Thus, either side could charge the other with creating political chaos.

Later in the note, it is asserted that, by interfering with politics, contemporary clergymen "fall short only of their Predecessors, when invested with a larger share of power and authority". First of all, the term "predecessor" is polysemous. Interpreted as "an ancestor, a forefather", the word suggests a continuity between the predecessors and their modern representatives. When read as "[a] thing that has been followed or replaced by another", however, it implies that the current clergymen attacked here are of a different denomination than their predecessors (*OED* "predecessor, *n.*" def. 1.a. and 1.b.). The predecessors can either be interpreted as Catholic clergymen in pre-Reformation Britain (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.355n) or as Puritans during the Commonwealth. However,

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the information provided later, i.e. that these predecessors "corrupt[ed] religion by superstition, or betray[ed] it by libertinism", makes the latter reading very unlikely. This means that we are left with two possible readings: (1) "predecessors" refers to Catholic clergymen in pre-Reformation Britain who are succeeded by modern Catholics, or (2) they refer to Catholic clergymen in pre-Reformation Britain who were supplanted by Protestants. In the latter case, Catholic clergymen would be portrayed as more corrupt and dangerous than their modern Protestant counterparts, but this reading would also disambiguate the reference of the annotated passage, implying that the poem itself is only concerned with attacking the Protestant clergy, which increases rather than mitigates the dangerousness of the passage.

The misconducts that these predecessors are charged with, i.e. "supporting arbitrary power", "exciting rebellion", "canonizing the vices of Tyrants", "blackening the virtues of Patriots", both give rise to new underspecifications and introduce considerable topical overtones. The support of arbitrary power can allude to both the connection between Catholicism and absolutism[248] *and* to the Protestant (or, rather, Puritan) backing of Cromwell. It also hints at contemporary Protestants' support for the corrupt Walpole regime. The exciting of rebellion throughout British history can both be laid to the charge of Protestants (e.g. the Civil War) and Catholics (e.g. the Rising of the North in 1569). And with regard to (near-)contemporary events, as stated above, the expression can both refer to the Protestant backing of the Glorious Revolution and to the various Jacobite uprisings and plots which relied on many Catholic co-conspirators. Next, the reference to "canonizing the vices of Tyrants" and "blackening the virtues of Patriots" can be read as an allusion to the Catholic support for Charles I and James II. But – despite the claim that the note is mostly concerned with the historical predecessors of contemporary clergymen – the topical overtones of these phrases are rather apparent. Contemporary readers would most likely have identified the tyrant as Walpole (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.355n) and the patriots as members of the so-called Patriot Opposition to that minister.[249] Moreover, now again on a more religious than political level, the charge of "corrupting religion by superstition" seems more directed towards Catholics,[250]

248 It was common to associate Catholicism and arbitrary power in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain; one prominent text that draws this connection is Andrew Marvell's 1678 *Account of the Growth of Popery, and Arbitrary Government in England* (cf. Fatovic 45).

249 For Pope's involvement with this movement, see Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*, chapter 4.

250 Many of Pope's contemporaries perceived Catholicism and superstition as inextricably linked, and "Popish superstition" was a set phrase (cf. Fatovic 45; Strong 78; 109). In Pope's

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whereas the accusation immediately following it ("betraying it by libertinism") appears to be targeted at the Anglican Church, which allows clergymen to marry and married couples to get divorced.

This wavering between different positions was also noted by Pope's enemies. In *Another Occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*, Cibber argues that Pope is mostly attacking Protestants in this note but still remarks on how quickly he changes his points of view throughout the annotation:

> 'in canonizing the Vices of Tyrants' (*That he might have left to the Popish Clergy*) 'or in blackening the Virtues of Patriots; in corrupting Religion by Superstition' (*Hey Day! What has he chang'd his Religion? Why this talking more like a Presbyterian, than a Papist, to be offended with the Superstition of a Protestant Church.*) 'Or betraying it by Libertinism–' (*No, there he is a Papist again*). (Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter* 36, original emphasis)

Throughout the annotation, we can see hence how the author carefully avoids identifying the target of its satire unequivocally. He strategically employs underspecified terms and relies on contemporary readers' associations of certain expressions with different, even contradictory referents. This means that the question – raised implicitly in the poem and fuelled by readers' knowledge of Pope's denomination – whether the passage is attacking Catholics or Protestants is never resolved; rather, the annotation considerably adds to readers' uncertainty. It likewise remains ambiguous whether the annotation is primarily concerned with general satire against corrupt clergymen of all times and denominations, with historical clerics, or rather with contemporary politicians. The use of charged terms like "minister" or "patriot" hints at the latter reading and adds an element of topical satire that is not present in the annotated passage itself, thereby contributing to the political attacks that run through the *Dunciad*s. All things taken together, this annotation is similar to the 'gutted' names in the 1728 *Dunciad*, in which Pope invites readers to fill in the blanks and gives every potential victim of his satire the right to feel insulted.

The annotation indeed to some extent serves as a defence of the poem: when readers found evidence that Pope was primarily writing against Protestants in the annotated passage,[251] he and Warburton could produce more or less convincing evidence that he was not. This defence bears some

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"A Key to the *Lock*" (which ironically claims to be uncovering the dangerous Catholic anti-government subtext of *The Rape of the Lock*), the 'author' Esdras Barnivelt claims that the sylphs in Pope's poem are an embodiment of "Popish Superstition" (Pope, *PW* 1: 197).

251 Cibber, for example, comments: "perhaps he thought it might be a Merit to his own Church, to blacken those who had rejected its Errors, and with the Constancy of Martyrs,

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similarities to Pope's 'traps' for the dunces in which dangerous readings are both heavily implied and, at the same time, denied (chapter 2.2.1.2). Yet, while these traps usually called for one specific disambiguation, the present note allows for multiple interpretations which are, however, closely restricted by readers' contextual knowledge. Furthermore, in these 'traps' it is rather obvious that the defence is entirely ironical, while in the present annotation it remains ambiguous how ironic the defence actually is. This is due to the fact that Pope's refusal to attack any denomination straightforwardly chimes in with the image that he often propagated about himself, i.e. that of a man who rejects all extremes and preaches charity to both Whigs and Tories, to both Protestants and Catholics.[252] The annotation could, after all, be an example of Pope's religious moderation. The combination of underspecification, politically and religiously charged terms, and the partly convincing argument that the passage is only concerned with a general satire of all corrupt clergymen thus results in an annotation that both mitigates and reinforces the potentially dangerous attack in the poem.

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had dar'd to *Protest* against them (Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter* 38–39, original emphasis).

252 For instance, on 16 August 1714 (i.e. shortly after Queen Anne's death, when there were grave concerns about the succession), he wrote to John Caryll: "Common charity of man to man, and universal good will to all, are the points I have most at heart; and I am sure those are not to be broken for the sake of any governor or government. […] [I wish] that this turn [Queen Anne's death] may put an end entirely to the divisions of Whigs and Tory, that those parties may love each other as well as I love them both, or at least hurt each other as little as I would either; and that our own people [Catholics] may live as quietly as we shall certainly let theirs […]. I am sure, if all Whigs and all Tories had the Spirit of one Roman Catholic that I know [i.e. Caryll], it would be well for all Catholics; and if all Roman Catholics had ever had that spirit, it had been well for all others; and we had never been charged with so wicked a spirit as that of persecution" (Pope, *Corr.* 1: 241).

Similarly, on 16 December 1715, he wrote to Sir William Trumbull: "I heartily joyn with you in wishing Quiet to our native country: Quiet in the state, which like charity in religion, is too much the perfection and happiness of either, to be broken or violated on any pretence or prospect whatsoever: fire and sword, and fire and faggot are equally my aversion. I can pray for opposite parties, and for opposite religions, with great sincerity" (Pope, *Corr.* 1: 324).

Protestations of his moderation can also be found in Pope's poetry. One need only think of the famous couplet in the *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* "In moderation placing all my glory, / While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory" (*TE* 4: ll. 67–68). Another example occurs in the *Epilogue to the Satires. Dialogue II*: "I follow *Virtue*, where she shines, I praise / Point she to Priest or Elder, Whig or Tory" (*TE* 4: ll. 95–96, original emphasis).

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2.4.2 *The Dunces' Games: Ambiguous Evaluations and Pope's Self-Presentation*

To an even greater degree than the previous note, the next example makes it hard to decide to what extent the annotation genuinely attempts to refute possible objections and to what extent it revels in the offensiveness of the passage and the ironic disingenuousness of its own defence. The annotated passage occurs in the context of the race between the publishers Bernard Lintot and Edmund Curll during the dunces' games in book two:

> Full in the middle way there stood a lake,
> Which Curl's Corinna chanc'd that morn to make:
> (Such was her wont, at early dawn to drop
> Her evening cates before his neighbour's shop,)
> Here fortun'd Curl to slide; loud shout the band,
> And Bernard! Bernard! rings thro' all the Strand.
> Obscene with filth the miscreant lies bewray'd[.] (*Dunciad* 2.69–75)

The aesthetic and moral objections that can, quite understandably, be levelled at this depiction are then addressed by an annotation which can be read as a (mock-)vindication of not only the annotated passage but also of the entire second book of the *Dunciad*s:

> Though this incident may seem too low and base for the dignity of an Epic poem, the learned very well know it to be but a copy of Homer and Virgil; the very words ὄνθος and *fimus* [dung] are used by them, though our poet [...] has remarkably enriched and coloured his language [...]. Mr. Dryden in *Mack-Fleckno*, has not scrupled to mention the *Morning Toast* at which the fishes bite in the Thames, *Pissing Alley, Reliques of the Bum, etc*. but our author is more grave, and (as a fine writer says of Virgil in his Georgics) *tosses about his* Dung *with an air of Majesty.* [...] [I]t was no easy matter to invent such games as were proportioned to the meaner degree of *Booksellers*. In Homer and Virgil, Ajax and Nisus the persons drawn in this plight are *Heroes*; whereas here they are such with whom it had been great impropriety to have joined any but vile ideas; besides the natural connection there is between Libellers and common Nusances. Nevertheless I have heard our author own, that this part of his Poem was (as it frequently happens) what cost him most trouble and pleased him least; but that he hoped it was excusable, since levelled at such as understand no delicate satyr: Thus the politest men are sometimes obliged to *swear*, when they happen to have to do with porters and oyster-wenches. (*Dunciad* 2.75n, original emphasis)

The numerous reasons that the annotation names why it is acceptable and even necessary to depict Curll slipping on the contents of his mistress's chamber pot belong to three fields: literary tradition, the notion of decorum, and the concern for the satirical effectiveness of the passage. The note begins by

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arguing that the content of the passage is permissible because a similar incident happens in both the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, and because Dryden's satire likewise revels in scatological humour. The note also reassures us that the *Dunciad*s not only follow these examples but improve on them: in contrast to Homer and Virgil when relating a similar mishap, Pope has "remarkably enriched and coloured his language", and he is "more grave" than Dryden in his *Mac Flecknoe*.[253] The annotation then goes on to explain that decorum even *demands* that the dunces are described in such a manner. The note suggests that, since even Homer and Virgil violate decorum by portraying *heroes* in this fashion, no one should berate Pope for *not* violating decorum when depicting a dunce in a situation that is entirely appropriate for him. The note thus aligns Pope with – and even appears to raise him above – the illustrious tradition of Homer, Virgil, and Dryden. The annotation closes by arguing that the obscene content of the passage is also warranted with respect to the effectiveness of the satire: even though this passage "cost him most trouble and pleased him least", the poet has to speak to and about the dunces in their own manner. Otherwise, he could neither reform nor at least punish them.

Apart from the reference to Dryden, which indeed seems to be a straightforward defence of Pope's use of scatological humour,[254] it remains unclear how sincere or ironic the note's vindication really is. On the one hand, it can indeed be read as an attempt to forestall objections against the *Dunciad*s, to defend Pope's ethos as justified moral satirist, and to emphasise his mastery of both the epic and the satiric form. On the other hand, however, the note can just as well be seen as revelling in the obscenity of the passage and, through its excessive praise of the poet's literary and moral superiority, as ironically undermining its own – at first sight – favourable and grave depiction of Pope.

The Annotator Defending His Author?

One factor that contributes to this ambiguity is the 'double authorship' of the annotation. The note implies the presence of an (unidentified) annotator

253 The prefatorial "Martinus Scriblerus of the Poem" likewise praises the *Dunciad*s for closely imitating their epic forerunners while also refining them: "The purity and chastity of *Diction* is so preserved, that in the places most suspicious, not the *words* but only the *images* have been censured, and yet are those images no other than have been sanctified by ancient and classical Authority, (though, as was the manner of those good times, not so curiously wrapped up) yea, and commented upon by most grave Doctors, and approved Critics" (*Dunciad* 74, original emphasis).

254 The phrases quoted by Pope indeed appear in *Mac Flecknoe*: "*Pissing Alley*" in l. 47, "Morning Toast" in l. 50, and "Reliques of the Bum" in l. 101 (Dryden, *Works* 2: 55–56, original emphasis).

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who does not necessarily have to be identified with Pope himself ("our poet [...] has remarkably enriched", "our author is more grave", "I have heard our author own"). However, most readers knew (or at least suspected) that this annotator was, of course, a fictional persona and that all notes in the three-book *Dunciad*s had been written by Pope himself (or at least someone who was acting on his behalf).[255] Thus, the question is whether one should read this persona as (1) Pope's serious mouthpiece employed to voice the poet's praises of himself, as (2) a facetious figure who is ironic about his defence of Pope and through whom Pope expresses his own ironic stance, or as (3) a serious but rather obtuse annotator whose zealous defence of 'his' author is being ridiculed by Pope. In the first case the self-defence would be serious on Pope's side, in the two latter ones it would be ironic.

Put briefly, the note presents the Scriblerus and Bentley problem all over again, though in a much less elaborate way (see chapter 2.3). The ambiguity of the note hence revolves around the question whether it is a sincere *imitation* of a defensive, xenographic annotation (employed by Pope to extol himself) or a *parody* of such a note, which – in the third case just mentioned – would also allow Pope to mock naive commentators who are overly protective of 'their' authors.[256]

Pope's Classical Models

A major contributing factor to the ambiguity of Pope's irony/seriousness here is the question which role the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* play in this (mock-)defence. Does the note unironically claim that since similar passages can be found in Homer and Virgil, Pope should not be reproached for presenting readers with such an image? Or does Pope cite the two epics in connection with this obscene

255 In the "Advertisement" for the 1729 *Dunciad Variorum* (reprinted as Appendix III in the four-book *Dunciad*), Pope claims that the "commentary which attends this poem was sent me from several hands" (*Dunciad* 372). However, as Valerie Rumbold notes, "it is for the most part unclear what, if anything, was contributed by others" (Rumbold, "Interpretation, Agency, Entropy" 195). Given the fact that most readers could guess at Pope's authorship, the third-person forms do not necessarily have to point to a distinct annotator persona but can also be interpreted as *illeisms* on Pope's side. For the ambiguity of the note, however, it does not make a great difference whether it is read as Pope using a fictional annotator persona to either seriously or ironically praise himself or as Pope seriously or ironically praising himself while using the third-person form.

256 Pope's enemies, of course, usually chose the former option. For example, in a different context, namely when wondering whether Warburton really wrote the "Advertisement" for the four-book *Dunciad*, Cibber complains: "Mr. *Pope*, you know, is so apt to put his own Praises into the Mouth of a fictitious Author, that we cannot be sure whom we are to thank for the modest Performance" (Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter* 20, original emphasis).

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passage in the *Dunciad*s in order to subtly criticise certain elements in them and to ironically undermine his own vindication? Howard Weinbrot favours the former option and argues that the references to Homer and Virgil in this passage "alienate Pope from normless Dunces, ally him with normative poets" (Weinbrot, "Annotating a Career" 473). I will show that this is only partly true.

The respective passages in Homer and Virgil are certainly not the loftiest parts of either work. They depict Ajax and Nisus slipping on the dung and blood of sacrificed oxen during the funeral games held in honour of Patroclus and Anchises, respectively:

> Unhappy *Ajax* stumbles on the Plain;
> (O'erturn'd by *Pallas*) where the slipp'ry Shore
> Was clogg'd with slimy Dung, and mingled Gore.
> . . . . . .
> Besmear'd with filth, and blotted o'er with Clay,
> Obscene to sight, the ruefull Racer lay;
> . . . . . .
> Thus sow'rly wail'd he, sputtering Dirt and Gore;
> A burst of Laughter echo'd thro' the Shore.
> (Homer, *Iliad* 23: 906–22, original emphasis, transl. Pope)

> When eager *Nisus*, hapless in his hast,
> Slip'd first, and slipping, fell upon the Plain,
> Soak'd with the Blood of Oxen, newly slain:
> The careless Victor had not mark'd his way,
> But treading where the treach'rous Puddle lay,
> His Heels flew up; and on the grassy Floor,
> He fell, besmear'd with Filth, and Holy Gore.
> Not mindless then, *Euryalus*, of thee,
> Nor of the Sacred Band of Amity.
> (Virgil, *Aeneid* 5: 427–35, original emphasis, transl. Dryden)

The aspect that makes it difficult to decide whether Pope refers to these passages as positive literary models or as unacceptably obscene elements in otherwise admirable works is the fact that the passages themselves are hard to evaluate. On the one hand, both of them serve functions that go beyond mere comic relief or revelling in obscenities. The disputes over who wins the various competitions in the funeral games for Patroclus in the *Iliad* – including Ajax' complaint that he would have won the race if Athene had not interfered – result in a "reintegration of the schisms arising from the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon" (Lord 195). Furthermore, Ajax' embarrassing situation serves poetic justice because it is "appropriate for the man who had displayed such foulness of language in his dispute with Idomeneus" (Richardson 249). In the *Aeneid*, Nisus, after having slipped himself, makes another runner trip so that

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his friend (or lover)[257] Euryalus can win the race. This introduces readers to the close relationship between Nisus and Euryalus and foreshadows "Nisus's rash attempt to save Euryalus in an ambush in Book 9" (Lord 197; cf. Fratantuono and R. A. Smith 374; Dyson 282).

Despite the ulterior functions that the passages serve in Homer and Virgil, the comic and scatological elements in both are obvious. As Claude Rawson points out, both Dryden and Pope were aware of this and to some extent tried to ameliorate the offensiveness of the passages when translating the *Aeneid* and *Iliad*. Their respective translations evince a "determination to assimilate these accounts to an idiom of heroic inflation which differs from their original counterparts", which – especially in the case of the Homer – employed rather crude terms (Rawson, *Satire and Sentiment* 91).[258] Furthermore, despite his reverence for classical authors in general and Homer in particular, Pope's commentary on his *Iliad* translation shows that he was far from seeing Homer as completely beyond reproach. In one instance, for example, he criticises him as follows:

> In the Original of this Place *Phœnix* tells *Achilles*, that as he placed him in his Infancy on his Lap, *he has often cast up the Wine he had drunk upon his Cloaths.* I wish I had any Authority to say these Verses were foisted into the Text: For tho' the Idea be indeed natural, it must be granted to be so very gross as to be utterly unworthy of *Homer*; nor do I see any Colour to soften the Meanness of it; such Images in any Age or Country, must have been too nauseous to be described. (Pope, *Iliad* 9.612n, original emphasis).

Though there are only a handful of such notes in the *Iliad* translation, they nevertheless attest to Pope's awareness that not even the works of Homer are without fault and that vindicating an obscene passage in his own poem merely by claiming that it is modelled on ancient poetry may not be very convincing. Unfortunately, in his translation of the *Iliad*, Pope (like Dacier in her translation) remains silent on the passage in which Ajax is slipping on the blood and excrements of the sacrificed oxen.

Ultimately, it cannot be determined with certainty how the reference to the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* should be read – whether it praises Homer and Virgil as

257 For the ambiguity of this issue and Pope's strategic use of this ambiguity elsewhere in the *Dunciad*s, see chapter 2.2.1.2.

258 For example, in his commentary on this part of the *Iliad*, Nicholas J. Richardson explains that "the word ὄνθος occurs only here in *Il.* or *Od.*: a comic episode introduces cruder language" (Richardson 256). He also points out that Virgil was a bit more scrupulous than Homer: "Virgil is reluctant to be so explicit in naming the dung in his imitation […] and he omits the picture of the loser with his mouth full of dung, spitting it out" (ibid.).

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nearly faultless literary models that no writer should be criticised for imitating, or whether it puts forward a mock-defence of the *Dunciad*s by subtly criticising a passage that Pope had left uncommented in his *Iliad* translation.

Pope and/vs. Addison

The last factor that contributes to the ambiguity of the note in the *Dunciad*s is the annotator persona's assertion that, in comparison with Dryden, "our author is more grave, and (as a fine writer says of Virgil in his Georgics) *tosses about his* Dung *with an air of Majesty*." Arguably, this quote sounds as if it came directly from the passages that are ridiculed in the *Peri Bathous.* Readers who were ignorant of its source and the identity of the "fine writer" would have been confused: as with the allusions to Ajax and Nisus's misfortunes, it is not clear whether the reference is genuinely used to defend the passage or whether it is introduced only to be attacked itself. More informed readers would have been able to identify the source as Addison's "Essay on Virgil's *Georgics*" (cf. editor's n for *Dunciad* 2.75n). In the *Essay*, Addison argues that we can see in Virgil "something of a rustick majesty, like that of a *Roman* Dictator at the plow-tail. He delivers the meanest of his precepts with a kind of grandeur, he breaks the clods and tosses the dung about with an air of gracefulness" (Addison, "Essay on Virgil's *Georgics*" 9, original emphasis).

This identification of the source, however, does not help much when having to decide whether Addison's image is used genuinely or ironically by Pope. On the one hand, Addison (who had died a decade before the publication of the *Dunciad Variorum*) was, of course, an established literary authority by this point (and had been one even during his lifetime). On the other hand, Pope's difficult and ambivalent relationship with him was fairly well-known to contemporary readers.[259] As a consequence, one cannot determine with certainty whether Pope uses the allusion to Addison as a way to introduce a jibe against

259 See, for example, Pope's public criticism of Addison in "Fragment of a Satire", which was published in Swift and Pope's *Miscellanies, The Last Volume* (1727) (cf. *TE* 6: 283–86). Pope's reservation against Addison mainly stemmed from Addison being involved to some degree "both in the general attempt to discredit Pope and his great translation [of the *Iliad*] (the very work which […] he himself had persuaded Pope to undertake), and also in the rival publication put forward in Tickell's name" (Ault 432). However, as Ault points out, Pope also included a positive account of Addison in his "Epistle to Mr. Addison, Occasion'd by his Dialogues on Medals", published in the 1720 *Works of Mr. Alexander Pope* (cf. Ault 429; for the poem, see *TE* 6: 202–07). In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (published in 1735, i.e. six years after readers first encountered the note analysed here), Pope also ridicules Addison in his portrait of 'Atticus' (ll. 193–214). For the difficult relationship between Pope and Addison, also see Mack, *Life* 274–82, and Coenen 23–46.

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his deceased rival or as a genuine attempt to vindicate his passage by referring to one of the most influential writers of his time.

The employment of an ambiguous annotator persona, the reference to similarly obscene passages in Homer and Virgil, and the allusion to Addison make it impossible to decide whether the annotation should be read as a genuine defence or as a mock-defence which emphasises and revels in the obscenity of the passage. As the two latter aspects show, the ambiguity of this note relies to a large extent on readers' ability to grasp the equivocality of its allusions. In any way, the note strengthens the attack against the dunces: either by arguing that the manner in which Curll is drawn is entirely justified or by again driving home how offensive the passage really is. Furthermore, the annotation ambiguates Pope's self-presentation, both portraying him as an ethical as well as literary authority *and* as a good-humoured self-ironist, who rejects his moral role and takes pleasure in writing about his enemies in the lowest way possible.

Conclusion

In these two annotations that mimic the xenographic function of evaluating the main text and defending its author, one can observe almost the full range of Pope's strategies of satirical self-annotation: (1) using an annotatorial persona who can be either read as Pope's mouthpiece or as the butt of his joke (as in chapter 2.3); (2) making ambiguous compliments that can just as well be read as criticisms (as in chapter 2.2.3); (3) raising the question whether he presents himself as a high-minded moralist or a witty libeller (as in chapters 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and to some extent 2.3); (4) relying on sources that can themselves be interpreted in various ways (as in chapters 2.2.1.2, 2.2.2, and 2.3.4); (5) inviting readers to find dangerous meanings in his poem while himself denying these meanings (as in chapter 2.2.1.2); and (6) employing the 'ambiguity of ambiguity' (as in chapter 2.2.3.2).

My discussion of a number of Pope's self-annotations in the *Dunciad*s has shown how many strategies he used in his notes, how many different objectives he pursued in them, and how many different kinds of ambiguities he employed in, and created through, his annotations. Pope's authorial notes do not straightforwardly explain the poem, nor are they simply used to parody the discourse tradition of xenographic annotation. Instead, they play an integral and extremely intricate role in the meaning-making of the *Dunciad*s and in the construction of Pope's public image – heaping ambiguities on ambiguities and constantly playing a teasing cat-and-mouse game with his readers.

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Interlude: Byron and Pope – Two Very Different Self-Annotators

As mentioned in the introduction to this study, I will not provide a comprehensive step-by-step comparison of the strategies used in, and functions of, *individual* annotations by Pope and Byron. The reason for this is that their notes as a whole have too little in common to warrant such a comparative approach. Even the notes in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (*EBSR*) – the work in Byron's œuvre that is most closely modelled on the *Dunciad*s – are so different from anything that can be found in Pope's satire that a comparison would yield little insight into Byron's self-annotatorial practices apart from the result that they fundamentally differ from Pope's. Where Pope's influence can be seen, however, is in the fact that Byron annotated his works in the first place. Without the *Dunciad*s to make self-annotation a nearly indispensable feature of satirical poetry until the end of the Romantic age, it is possible that Byron (and other Romantic poets) would not even have thought about annotating their own works in such extensive and intricate ways. Put briefly, the very existence of Byron's notes can be partly attributed to Pope's lasting influence, but the strategies and functions of his annotations only bear very few similarities to those of his great idol.[1] This can be seen by juxtaposing one of Pope's satirical notes and four of Byron's.

Pope's extremely long annotation on John Dennis is rather symptomatic of his notes in the *Dunciad*s in general. It is appended to the line "And all the mighty Mad in Dennis rage" and reads:

> This is by no means to be understood literally, as if Mr. Dennis were really mad, according to the Narrative of Dr. Norris in Swift and Pope's Miscellanies, vol. 3. No – it is spoken of that *Excellent* and *Divine Madness*, so often mentioned by Plato […].
>
> Mr. Theobald, in the Censor, vol. ii. N. 33. calls Mr. Dennis by the name of Furius. 'The modern Furius is to be looked upon as more an object of pity, than of that which he daily provokes, laughter and contempt. Did we really know how much this *poor* man (*I wish that reflection on* poverty *had been spared*) suffers by being contradicted, or, which is the same thing in effect, by hearing another praised[.] […] His very panegyric is spiteful[.] […]' *etc*. Indeed his pieces against

1 This is rather typical of Byron: he extolled Pope in theory but rarely imitated him in practice. Or, as John Clubbe puts it: according to Byron, a "right poetical system was one that adhered strictly to the practice and precepts of Pope, both of which Byron defended more faithfully than he followed" (Clubbe 74).

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> our poet are somewhat of an angry character, and as they are now scarce extant, a taste of his style may be satisfactory to the curious. 'A young, squab, short gentleman, whose outward form, though it should be that of downright monkey, would not differ so much from human shape as his unthinking immaterial part does from human understanding. – He is as stupid and as venomous as a hunchback'd toad. […]' Reflect. on the Essay on Criticism, p. 26. 29, 30.
>
> It would be unjust not to add his reasons for this Fury, they are so strong and so coercive: 'I regard him (saith he) as an *Enemy*, not so much to me, as to my King, to my Country, to my Religion, and to that Liberty which has been the sole felicity of my life. […] I look upon it as my duty, I say, to do – *you shall see what* – to pull the lion's skin from this little Ass, which popular error has thrown round him; and to shew that this Author, who has been lately so much in vogue, has neither sense in his thoughts, nor English in his expressions.' Dennis Rem. on Hom. Pref. p. 2. 91, *etc*.
>
> Besides these public-spirited reasons, Mr. D. had a private one […]. He was even in bodily fear of his life from the machinations of the said Mr. P. […] [The] last words of his book plainly discover Mr. D.'s suspicion was that of being *poisoned*, in like manner as Mr. Curl had been before him; of which fact see *A full and true account of a horrid and barbarous revenge, by poison, on the body of Edmund Curl*, printed in 1716[.] […]
>
> For the rest; Mr. John Dennis was the son of a Sadler [sic] in London, born in 1657. He paid court to Mr. Dryden: and having obtained some correspondence with Mr. Wycherly [sic] and Mr. Congreve, he immediately obliged the public with their Letters. He made himself known to the Government by many admirable schemes and projects; which the Ministry, for reasons best known to themselves, constantly kept private. For his character, as a writer, it is given us as follows: 'Mr. Dennis is *excellent* at Pindaric writings, *perfectly regular* in all his performances, and a person of *sound Learning*. That he is master of a great deal of *Penetration* and *Judgment*, his criticisms, (particularly on *Prince Arthur*) do sufficiently demonstrate.' From the same account it also appears that he writ Plays 'more to get *Reputation* than *Money*.' Dennis of himself. […] (*Dunciad* 1.106n, original emphasis)

I would like to focus on three aspects of this note: (1) Pope's use of the annotation to justify his satire against Dennis, (2) Pope's attempt at suggesting that he is making public problems his private cause (rather than the other way round), and (3) – despite its extreme length – the fact that the note shows only little digressiveness.

Regarding the first aspect, large portions of the annotation are used to explain and justify why Pope is attacking Dennis. For one, it emphasises that Dennis is generally seen as a very unpleasant man who cannot bear contradiction or to hear other writers being praised (as evinced by Theobald's account of him). The fact that even Theobald – another prominent member of the dunces in Pope's satire – shares Pope's contempt of Dennis is meant to show that Pope's feelings do not spring from personal enmity but are a reasonable reaction to Dennis's character and behaviour. Furthermore, the extremely insulting

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criticisms of Pope's works (written long before the *Dunciad*s) that are quoted in the note imply that Pope is merely defending himself as against an aggressor. And as if this was not enough to make readers take Pope's side against Dennis, the last paragraph of the note annotation depicts Dennis as an untrustworthy man who publishes private letters as soon as he gets his hands on them, a gadfly who is constantly pestering the government with strange und unfeasible schemes, and a narcissist who writes excessive praises of himself.

The second aspect – Pope's implication that his satire against Dennis is tackling a public rather than a personal problem – is a direct result of this depiction of Dennis. Here, as throughout the *Dunciad*s, we are being told that the dunce has a negative impact on almost every aspect of life: literature, patronage, criticism, political discourse, morals, etc. He is everyone's problem, and Pope (seriously or ironically) presents himself as the brave champion who will rid society of this nuisance.

With regard to the third aspect, almost everything in the annotation is directly related to the annotated passage. There is only very little digression except for the ironical claim that Dennis is not being depicted as insane here, the jokes about Pope's poisoning of Curll, and the deliberately incorrect disambiguation of Theobald's use of the word "poor" to describe Dennis. Thus, despite its excessive length (I have only quoted about half of it here), the annotation is almost exclusively concerned with the question raised by the annotated passage, namely who Dennis is and why he is being satirised in the *Dunciad*s.

Four examples drawn from Byron's works will show how strongly his practice of satirical annotation deviates from Pope's. First of all, regarding the justification of satire, most of the attacks in *EBSR* are made to seem rather light-hearted and baseless by Byron's notes (apart from those on the Earl of Carlisle (see below) as well as those on Francis Jeffrey, whom Byron believed to be the critic who wrote the damning review of his *Hours of Idleness*). Take, for instance, the one on Amos and/or Joseph Cottle:

> Mr. Cottle, Amos, Joseph, I don't know which, but one or both, once sellers of books they did not write, and now writers of books they do not sell, have published a pair of Epics – 'Alfred' (poor Alfred! Pye has been at him too!) – 'Alfred' and the 'Fall of Cambria'. (*EBSR* 406n; *CPW* 1: 406)

Pope presents Dennis as a character who has truly earned the reader's (and everybody else's) contempt. The Cottles in *EBSR*, however, seem to be random writers whom Byron is more or less unfamiliar with and whose only crime is to have published two unsuccessful epics. In *Hints from Horace*, written only slightly later than *EBSR*, Byron even turns the whole notion of personal satire

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on its head. Annotating the lines "some pretending scribbler of the court, / Some rhyming peer, – Carlisle or Carysfort" (*Hints from Horace* 721–22var), he explains that

> of 'John Joshua, Earl of Carysfort', I know nothing at present, but from an advertisement in an old newspaper of certain Poems and Tragedies by his Lordship, which I saw by accident in the Morea. Being a rhymer himself, he will forgive the liberty I take with his name, seeing, as he must, how very commodious it is at the close of that couplet; and as for what follows and goes before, let him place it to the account of the other Thane [i.e. Carlisle]; since I cannot, under these circumstances, augur pro or con the contents of his 'foolscap crown octavos'. (*Hints from Horace* 722var n; *CPW* 1: 442–43)

When reading the annotated lines, readers – knowing the conventions of annotated personal satire upheld by Pope, Gifford, and Mathias – expect to find a note that justifies why Carysfort's name is included in the poem and that lists his many failings and misdeeds in order to publicly humiliate him so that from now on he will abstain from further wrongdoing. Byron's annotation subverts this expectation and explains that the only reason for mentioning Carysfort is that he needed a rhyme word for "court". The attack of the passage is, as the note explains, entirely targeted at the Earl of Carlisle (see below for Byron's attack against him in *EBSR*).[2] As in the case of the Cottle brothers, Byron's annotation contains neither bitterness nor justification, only light-hearted fun. As Robert Hume argues, in Byron's early satires the poet "aims to ridicule those he does not like, but unlike the Augustans he seems to lack any higher purpose in doing so, for he presents no positive standards and writes in defense of nothing" (Hume 499; also cf. Yarker 79). In the passage just discussed, Byron is not even concerned with someone "he does not like"; Carysfort is included merely for his name. Of course, this is not meant to suggest that Byron never wrote any serious satirical notes containing sharp personal attacks. One need only think of his annotation on the Elgin Marbles (cf. *CHP* 2.12n; *CPW* 2: 190–91) and the long note vituperating Robert Southey in the appendix to *The Two Foscari* (cf. *CPW* 6: 223–25). However, both of Byron's poems that most prominently evoke Pope's works – *EBSR* and *Hints from Horace*[3] – contain annotations that are vastly different from Pope's in their approach to personal satire.

2 The claim that a word or name was only introduced because it suits the metre or rhyme is also a running joke in *Don Juan.* For a further example, see Byron's note on Henry Hallam in *EBSR*, which is discussed in chapter 3.4.4.

3 *Hints from Horace* harks back less to the *Dunciad*s and more to Pope's *Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated* as well as to the *Essay on Criticism* (cf. editor's n in *CPW* 1: 427).

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The second great difference between the annotations in Pope's *Dunciad*s and Byron's *EBSR* is that Pope claims to make the public's problems his private cause while Byron tries to make his personal problems a public cause. Byron's dunces either pose little problems to society at all (as shown above), or they were apparently included in *EBSR* for a private, only half-disclosed offence that concerns no one but Byron himself. Referring to the lines "Let STOTT, CARLISLE, MATILDA, and the rest / Of Grub-street, and of Grosvenor-Place the best, / Scrawl on, 'till death release us from the strain" (*EBSR* 927–29), Byron's explanation remains rather opaque:

> It may be asked, why I have censured the Earl of Carlisle, my guardian and relative, to whom I dedicated a volume of puerile poems a few years ago? – The guardianship was nominal, at least as far as I have been able to discover; the relationship I cannot help, and am very sorry for it; but as his Lordship seemed to forget it on a very essential occasion to me, I shall not burden my memory with the recollection. I do not think that personal differences sanction the unjust condemnation of a brother scribbler; but I see no reason why they should act as a preventive, when the author, noble or ignoble, has, for a series of years, beguiled a 'discerning public' (as the advertisements have it) with divers reams of most orthodox, imperial nonsense. […] If, before I escaped from my teens, I said anything in favour of his Lordship's paper books, it was in the way of dutiful dedication, and more from the advice of others than my own judgment, and I seize the first opportunity of pronouncing my sincere recantation. (*EBSR* 927n; *CPW* 1: 416)

This is one of the many tantalising autobiographical half-revelations that we can find throughout Byron's annotations. Readers only learn that Carlisle is Byron's relative and that, for some unnamed reason, he provoked Byron's anger.[4] The annotation shifts readers' attention away from the satire itself towards the author's private life. In the *Dunciad*s, references to Pope's private affairs are a means to a public end. They present him as a virtuous man and justified satirist (while also sometimes subverting this image for satirical purposes, see e.g. chapter 2.2.2 and chapter 2.2.3) and cite evidence of how the dunces tried to attack his character, sabotage his personal relationships, and harm his friends. By contrast, in Byron's case, the public satire against incompetent authors partly seems to be a pretext to (half-)inform readers about his private struggles. Here, the allusion to his private life is not a means to an end but an end itself.

4 The reason was that, contrary to custom, he had refused to introduce Byron to the House of Lords, which put Byron in the embarrassing situation of having to prove his legitimacy before he could take his seat (cf. Marchand 1: 168).

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This issue is to some degree related to the third big difference between Pope's and Byron's satirical self-annotations. Pope's notes are often extremely long, but they are rarely digressive or overly loquacious. They are straightforwardly targeted at the lemmatised part of the main text rather than taking the lemma as a starting point to talk about something entirely different. In Byron, the opposite is often the case. One of the most extreme examples of satirical digressiveness in Byron's notes can be found not in *EBSR* but in the much later non-satirical poem *The Island*. The annotated passage simply reads: "The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell, / Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell" and, in fact, does not raise any questions that might require elucidation (*Island* 2.406–07). Nevertheless, Byron appends the following note:

> If the reader will apply to his ear the sea-shell on his chimney-piece, he will be aware of what is alluded to. If the text should appear obscure, he will find in 'Gebir' the same idea better expressed in two lines. – The poem I never read, but have heard the lines quoted by a more recondite reader – who seems to be of a different opinion from the Editor of the Quarterly Review, who qualified it, in his answer to the Critical Reviewer of his Juvenal, as trash of the worst and most insane description. It is to Mr. Landor, the author of Gebir, so qualified, and of some Latin poems, which vie with Martial or Catullus in obscenity, that the immaculate Mr. Southey addresses his declamation against impurity! (*Island* 2.407n; *CPW* 7: 146)

The beginning of the annotation still refers to the lemma and relates the poem to the (imagined) readers' life experience, thus evoking a very clear (though over-generalising) picture of Byron's audience. It both playfully establishes a sense of community (Byron knows exactly who he is talking to; he has a vivid image of his readers and even their home) and of distance (for many readers, this description of their living/reading situation would not have been accurate). This is followed by what may at first sight appear as an instance of social networking, i.e. the compliment to the author of *Gebir*, Walter Savage Landor. Yet, this compliment is unexpectedly undermined in the next sentence, in which Byron claims never to have read the poem. The sentence also contains a jibe at the unnamed person who quoted the lines to Byron. As the annotation progresses, things get even more convoluted. Byron next alludes to William Gifford's damning reference to Landor's poem in an article in which Gifford defends himself against criticisms levelled at his translation of Juvenal.[5] What

5 McGann explains that the *Critical Review* attacked Gifford's translation in 1802 – more than two decades before Byron's *The Island* was published (cf. editor's in in *CPW* 7: 146). Gifford's counter-attack briefly digresses to describe *Gebir* as "a jumble of incomprehensible trash […], the most vile and despicable effusion of a mad and muddy brain that ever disgraced […] the

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seemed to start out as a compliment to Landor, now becomes a downright attack ("trash of the worst and most insane description"). Byron then uses Gifford's censure of Landor to argue that Robert Southey, who praises Landor (and attacks Byron) in the preface to *A Vision of Judgment*,[6] is a hypocrite who pretends to be declaiming "against impurity" while extolling a man whose writings have been condemned for their immorality by one of the most influential critics of the age. In short, the sea-shells lead to Landor, Landor leads to Gifford, Gifford leads to the attack against Landor, Gifford's attack against Landor indirectly incriminates Southey, which, in turn, is used by Byron to defend himself against the accusations levelled against him in Southey's *A Vision of Judgment*. And all of this is included in a poem that is not at all concerned with satirising contemporary poets but with the mutiny on the *Bounty*. As was shown throughout the first half of this study, Pope's notes are usually directly related to the annotated passages. And as will be shown in the next half, Byron's often take his poems as starting points only to veer off into completely different directions.

Even in this juxtaposition of annotations that share an overall aim, namely to satirise, the stark differences between Byron and Pope become apparent. When looking at Byron's annotations that are not concerned with satire at all, there is hardly any common ground between them and Pope's that would allow one to juxtapose the two authors' approaches to self-annotation in any two given notes. Thus, a detailed, step-by-step comparison between individual notes would not be very fruitful for gaining a deeper insight into Byron's strategies and functions of self-annotation. In what follows, instead of comparing them to Pope's notes and analysing what Byron's annotations do *not* do, I will read them on their terms and show both what they indeed do and how they do it. A discussion of the similarities and differences between Pope's and Byron's strategies and functions of self-annotation in general (rather than with respect to specific notes) will be presented in the overall conclusion of this study.

'darkened walls' of Bedlam"; he also calls Walter Savage Landor a "mischievous ideot [sic]" (Gifford, *An Examination* 7).

6 In this preface, Southey quotes Landor's exhortation of Byron in his essay "De Cultu atque Usu Latini Sermonis", which was published in *Idyllia Heroica* in 1820 (cf. Super 797). In the preface to *The Vision of Judgment* – Byron's answer to Southey's *A Vision of Judgment* – Byron attacks both Southey and Landor. He also makes slighting remarks on Landor in *Don Juan* 11.59 and the appendix to *The Two Foscari* (cf. *CPW* 6: 225). For the troubled relationship between Byron and Landor, see Super *passim*.

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CHAPTER 3

Functions and Strategies of Self-Annotation in Byron

3.1 Byron's Self-Annotations in Context: The Golden Age of Self-Annotation

In a letter to Robert Charles Dallas on 15 September 1811, Byron facetiously calls annotations the "modern indispensables" of rhyme (*BLJ* 2: 99). What sounds like an overstatement is, in fact, rather close to the truth: in the Romantic age, literary self-annotations were nearly ubiquitous – not only in poetry but, albeit to a lesser extent, also in prose and drama (cf. E. Simpson, *Literary Minstrelsy* 20–21; A. Watson, *Romantic Marginality* 1–9).[1] Byron was by no means the only writer to comment on the prevalence of authorial notes around 1800. For example, Robert Southey remarks in a letter to his publisher:

> With regard to the illustrations [i.e. annotations] of my larger poems, I am glad you think of them, because such things are now become so customary that the poet who goes without them might seem to hold but a low place in public opinion. (Southey, *Coll. Letters* 6: letter 3426)

P. B. Shelley, who (except for *Queen Mab*) usually left his works unannotated, was rather critical of the practice but nevertheless recognised the contemporary vogue for self-annotation. In a letter to Thomas Medwin, he tells him that

> [t]he only general error, if it be such, in your Poem, seems to me to be the employment of Indian words, in the body of the piece, & the relegation of their meaning to the notes. Strictly, I imagine, every expression in a poem ought to be in itself an intelligible picture. But this practice, though foreign to that of the great Poets of former times, is so highly admired by our contemporaries that I can hardly counsel you to dissent. And then you have Moore & Lord Byron on your side, who being much better & more successful poets than I am, may be supposed to

1 However, it is only fair to point out that, despite the fashion for self-annotation, not all authors in the Romantic age appended notes to their own works. For instance, John Hookham Frere's *Whistlecraft* and Giovanni Battista Casti's *Novelle Galanti* – both of which served as models for Byron's *ottava rima* poems – do not contain annotations. Likewise, Charles Churchill's highly successful and influential *Rosciad* was not annotated either. Most prominently perhaps, neither Austen nor Keats (apart from one footnote at the end of *Lamia*) made use of self-annotations in their works.

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> know better the road to success, than one who has sought & missed it. (Shelley, *Letters* 2: 183–84)

Byron's friend Thomas Moore – himself an avid self-annotator[2] – makes fun of the fashion in the preface to his (heavily annotated) poems *Corruption* and *Intolerance* (cf. E. Simpson, *Literary Minstrelsy* 19):

> The practice, which has lately been introduced into literature, of writing very long notes upon very indifferent verses, appears to me a rather happy invention; for it supplies us with a mode of turning stupid poetry to account; and, as horses too dull for the saddle may serve to draw lumber, so Poems of this kind make excellent beasts of burden, and will bear notes, though they may not bear reading. Besides, the comments in such cases are so little under the necessity of paying any servile deference to the text, that they may even adopt that Socratic dogma, 'Quod supra nos nihil ad nos' ['What is above us, is nothing to us']. (T. Moore, *Corruption and Intolerance* v)

Ridiculing the craze for self-annotation, two poems even felt the need to facetiously announce on their title pages that they are "without notes": *The Lash, A Satire: Without Notes* (1809) and *Battle of Niagara: A Poem Without Notes* (1818), both of which were published anonymously.

Notwithstanding the popularity of self-annotation in the Romantic age, there is no large-scale overview of the highly diverse practices of authorial annotation during this period. The only published monograph so far is Alex Watson's excellent study *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* which discusses the self-annotations of Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), Robert Southey, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and Byron as well as Hobhouse's collaboration with, and notes on, the latter. Watson provides insightful close-readings of single works but is not concerned with offering a large-scale overview of self-annotatorial practices, nor does he provide much information on whether readers actually paid attention to the notes.

The present chapter will embed Byron's use of authorial notes in their larger literary and cultural context. Because of the prevalence of self-annotation in his age, it is, of course, impossible to provide a detailed overview of *all* contemporary annotatorial practices here.[3] This introductory chapter will hence focus

2 For instance, Moore recorded that he spent an entire month writing the annotations on his *The Loves of the Angels* and his *Fables for the Holy Alliance* (cf. T. Moore, *Journal of Thomas Moore* 2: 619).

3 Romantic works with authorial notes which are not discussed here because they are not directly relevant for Byron can be found in my collection of self-annotated works between

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on three aspects. Firstly, in order to show how Byron's annotations differ from those of his contemporaries, I will outline a few tendencies in the style and content of Romantic self-annotations as a whole. Secondly, I will show that Byron's contemporaries avidly read and discussed literary self-annotations – rather than ignored them, as has sometimes been argued[4]. Lastly, I will attempt to reconstruct *how* exactly readers in the Romantic age approached annotations: did they constantly jump between main text and notes, or did they read the whole main text first and only paid attention to the annotations in a second reading?

3.1.1 *Tendencies of Self-Annotation in Byron's Time*

In my analysis of Byron's self-annotations, three features will play an especially prominent role: (1) his use of a very overt annotatorial voice and his practice of (allegedly) basing notes on personal experience rather than on book knowledge; (2) his penchant for appending facetious notes to lofty passages and of using his notes to 'correct' and contradict the main text; and (3) his reliance on editorial fiction and editorial personas as a means of ambiguation. In order to discuss whether and to what extent Byron's self-annotations stand out among those of his contemporaries, I will very briefly outline how a handful of Romantic authors whose works were well-known to Byron approached these three aspects. These are: Walter Scott, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Thomas Moore, Samuel Rogers, Percy Shelley, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Samuel Henley (who wrote the notes for William Beckford's *Vathek*, thus being an allographic rather than an authorial annotator).[5] This survey is, of course, not designed to provide a comprehensive discussion of these authors' notes,

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1300 and 1900 in the 'External Appendix' (http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434; for a brief introduction to this collection, see p. 391). Prominent examples include Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl*, Thomas Love Peacock *Nightmare Abbey*, Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, Thomas de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*, and Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets, The Emigrants*, and *Beachy Head.* Furthermore, even though Byron was very familiar with them, Robert Burns's *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* are not discussed here because they are only rather sparsely annotated. For Burns's (and other eighteenth-century Scottish poets') self-annotations, see R. Brown, "Self-Curation, Self-Editing and Audience Construction by Eighteenth-Century Scots Vernacular Poets".

4 Chatsiou, for example, argues that "[c]ontemporary readers did not like the notes", but the only evidence she cites is William Cobbett's claim that annotations are rarely read (for Cobbett, see below) (Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 641).

5 Elsewhere in this study, I also briefly discuss how other Romantic authors (Madame de Staël, Walter Scott, and the Lake Poets) used self-annotations for social networking, see p. 313 n below.

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much less of self-annotation during the Romantic age in general. The – very limited – discussion is meant to shine a light on Byron rather than provide an in-depth study of others' works, but it also sets out to illustrate the great diversity of Romantic practices of self-annotation, thus hopefully inspiring future studies in this fruitful field of research.

First, however, one important general development of self-annotation between 1700 and 1830 needs to be outlined.[6] As I have shown in chapter 2.1.3, Pope's *Dunciad*s popularised excessive self-annotation for satirical poems and other humorous works. This popularity only waned at the end of the Romantic age. By contrast, self-annotated 'serious' poems, i.e. works that deal with historical, religious, philosophical, political, or scientific topics in a non-comical way, usually only featured a few brief notes between ca. 1700 and ca. 1750. Thus, even though there had been a tradition of extensive self-annotation for 'serious' texts *before* the Augustan age (e.g. by Jonson, Donne, Cowley, Bunyan, Opitz, and Gryphius), Pope's contemporaries employed annotations primarily for satirical and comical verse. This changed in the course of the eighteenth century.

Between ca. 1750 and ca. 1770, the self-annotations in 'serious' poems grew longer and more numerous. There was also considerable diversity: some self-annotated texts published during this time feature many long notes, some many short ones, and some a few long ones. Self-annotated 'serious' works that only feature a few short annotations became rarer. Between 1770 and 1800, the notes in 'serious' self-annotated poems became even lengthier and more numerous. By this point, it is common to find short notes or even long ones on almost every page of a self-annotated poem.[7] And from 1800 up until ca. 1830, it was rather popular for self-annotated 'serious' works of poetry to feature extremely long and numerous notes.[8] Put briefly, self-annotated *humorous* poetry commonly featured extensive notes from 1729 onwards until the end of the Romantic age, while the length and number of self-annotations in

6 The outline that follows is based on my 'External Appendix' which lists more than 1100 self-annotated literary works published between 1300 and 1900: http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434.

7 It should, however, be remembered that 'only' about half of the English poems published during this time span featured self-annotations in the first place (see p. 78 above).

8 To name only a few examples (referring to the number of pages in the respective first or at least very early editions): in Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), the poem spans 190 pages and the endnotes 120 pages; in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II (1812), the poem takes up 113 pages and the endnotes 66 pages; in Shelley's *Queen Mab* (1813), the poem covers 121 pages and the endnotes 115 pages; and in Scott's *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), the poem spans 256 pages and the endnotes 164 pages.

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'*serious*' poetry started to increase from 1750 onwards and culminated in the decades between 1800 and 1830.

It is not surprising that the slow revival of extensively self-annotated 'serious' poetry coincided with the publication of such immensely successful works as Macpherson's Ossian poems, Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and Warton's *The History of English Poetry* (cf. F. Robertson 145; E. Simpson, "Orality and Improvisation" 376–77). All three contain a considerable number of xenographic annotations – or, in the case of the Ossian poems, self-annotations disguised as xenographic commentary. The abundance of scholarly, antiquarian notes in these editions seems to have inspired many contemporary authors to approach their own works in the same way, and to add more or less scholarly annotations to their non-satirical and non-comical works, especially to such as dealt with temporally or spatially remote topics (cf. E. Simpson, "Orality and Improvisation" 376–77).

Overt vs. Covert Annotatorial Voice & Book Learning vs. Personal Experience

The importance of these scholarly models for Romantic-era self-annotations raises the question whether or not Byron's contemporaries usually imitated the tone and content of xenographic notes. In other words, do their annotations tend to feature an impersonal voice[9] that (seemingly) objectively presents information drawn from scholarly sources, or do they rather include authorial self-insertions and references to personal anecdotes rather than to written works? The answer to this question will serve to illustrate the diversity of Romantic annotation. At the most scholarly and impersonal end of the spectrum, we can find, for example, the footnotes and endnotes in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. These mainly identify allusions, translate words, and provide contextual information about history, religion, philosophy, and culture. The great majority of the notes consist of quotes from scholarly works; the bibliographic information of the sources is usually meticulously cited, especially in the endnotes. The notes do not contain any comments or personal anecdotes by Moore; the annotator remains covert and impersonal. All of these characteristics can also be found in Henley's allographic notes on William Beckford's

9 It should, however, be noted that many xenographic commentaries in the Romantic age feature a rather overt annotatorial voice (e.g. 'I believe that', 'I have learnt from the local peasants that …'). One prominent example of this approach is William Lisle Bowles 1806 edition of Pope. Hence, some Romantic self-annotators made their notes appear more neutral and objective than even scholarly annotators.

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Vathek, which was Byron's favourite novel.[10] The class to which these annotations belong almost entirely adheres to the conventions of xenographic scholarly annotations.

The majority of self-annotated works in the Romantic age can be seen as 'mixed bags', i.e. they include both references to scholarly sources and anecdotal or even autobiographical comments by the author, and they feature both notes written in an impersonal, objective voice and notes that overtly flaunt their subjectivity and grounding in private experience. This goes, for instance, for most of Walter Scott's and Robert Southey's poems.[11] However, in their annotations, scholarship (conscientiously cited and presented by an impersonal, covert speaker) usually still outweighs subjective, personal musings presented by an overt author/annotator persona.

The annotations in, for example, Shelley's *Queen Mab* and Moore's *Corruption* and *Intolerance*, which take the annotated poems as pretexts to enter into lengthy political and religious discussions, are a bit harder to classify.[12] Even though they assume a scholarly tone and often meticulously quote and cite their sources, the very fact that they are more or less independent (and quite controversial) essays rather than notes subservient to the text make them different from many (though by no means all) xenographic scholarly annotations.

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10 The annotations were written by Samuel Henley (who translated Beckford's French text into English) and were endorsed by the author himself. Neither Henley's nor Beckford's name was mentioned in the first English edition of 1786. For more information on the collaboration between Beckford and Henley, see A. Watson, *Romantic Marginality* 33–38.

11 For a detailed discussion of Southey's annotatorial practice see A. Watson, "Marginal Imprints"; Chatsiou, "Robert Southey's 'Old Curiosity-Shops'"; and Simmons, "'Useful and Wasteful Both'". While the annotations for Scott's Waverly novels have received considerable scholarly attention, secondary literature about Scott's notes for his poems is scarce. Among the few exceptions are Gillian Hughes's "Pickling Virgil?" and John H. Alexander's chapter "On the Notes" in his *The Lay of the Last Minstrel: Three Essays.* Scott's Waverly novels were only very sparsely annotated when they first appeared; the author added the extensive commentary only before publishing the *magnum opus* edition of his novels (1829–1833). Since the annotations for the Waverly novels were published after Byron's death, they will not be discussed here. For studies on them, see Mayer, "The Internal Machinery Displayed"; Mayer, "The Illogical Status of Novelistic Discourse"; Mayer, "Authors and Readers"; and Mayer, "Scott's Editing". Charlotte Smith's notes also fall under this category, but they were most likely not known to Byron. For her self-annotations, see Reinfandt, "The Textures of Romanticism"; Labbe, *Charlotte Smith* 44–59; and Labbe, "'Transplanted into more congenial soil'".

12 For studies of Shelley's notes on *Queen Mab*, see Erchinger, "Science, Footnotes and the Margins of Poetry"; and Morton, "The Notes to *Queen Mab* and Shelley's Spinozism". The annotations for Moore's satirical poems are discussed in the 2003 edition of *The Satires of Thomas Moore* (ed. Jane Moore).

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In the case of Wordsworth, we are usually confronted with factual annotations (e.g. translating dialect words and offering enriching contextual information), in which, however, the presence of the annotator is often very palpable.[13] For instance, in a note on the preface of his *Excursion*, Wordsworth refers to Robert Heron's *Observations Made in a Journey Through the Western Counties of Scotland* and explains: "I regret that I have not the book at hand to quote the passage" (W. Wordsworth, *Excursion* 425). Similarly, in an annotation on sonnet XVII in *The River Duddon*, he refers to his own experience rather than book knowledge: "Often have I heard anglers speak of the grandeur of [the eagles'] appearance" (W. Wordsworth, *Poetical Works* 3: 508). An even greater overtness of the annotatorial voice and reliance on personal experience rather than on scholarly sources can be found in Southey's *The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo*.

It can be concluded that Romantic self-annotations cover the whole spectrum from being entirely impersonal to being highly subjective, from meticulously quoting and citing sources to almost exclusively relying on personal anecdotes. The majority of works contain a mix of both. As we will see, a similar mix can be found in Byron, yet his notes heavily lean to the personal side. In his annotations we frequently find an overt annotatorial voice and the (not always correct)[14] appearance of him referring to his personal experience rather than book knowledge. Thus, to a much greater extent than any of his contemporaries, Byron's annotations are characterised by his self-insertions. The main

13 For a study of Wordsworth's annotations, see Broadhead, "Framing Dialect in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*".

14 For example, when describing the destroyed chapel on the battlefield of Morat, he simply glosses over the fact that he takes the description not from his own memory of the place but verbatim from the published letters of Friedrich von Matthisson (cf. *CHP* 3.63n; *CPW* 2: 307). This is the most blatant case of plagiarism that I could find in Byron's self-annotations. Samuel Rogers had lent Byron his copy of the English translation of Matthisson's letters (*Letters Written from Various Parts of the Continent, Between the Years 1785 and 1794*, published 1799), and Byron took the book with him when he went to Switzerland (cf. *BLJ* 5: 87–88). It is likely that these letters also made Byron and John Polidori search for the epitaph of Julia Alpinula because Polidori notes in his diary entry for 24 May 1816: "In the walls of the church we sought in vain for the inscription that Mathison [sic] mentions to Julia Alpinula" (Polidori 94). The epitaph is referred to in *CHP* 3.66n; *CPW* 2: 308. Matthisson's letter to Friedrich von Köpken, dated 30 October 1787, both provides Julia Alpinula's epitaph and story as well as a detailed description of the field of Morat that Byron copies without mentioning his source (cf. Matthisson 97–98; 100).

In the case of *The Giaour*, Byron only mentions his sources at the very end of the work, without citing particular pages or even chapters: "For the contents of some of the notes I am indebted partly to D'Herbelot, and partly to […] the 'Caliph Vathek'" (*Giaour* 1334n; *CPW* 3: 423, for a discussion of this note, see chapter 3.2.1.2).

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(though by no means only) exception to this rule are the appendices to *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, and *The Island* which contain long quotes from scholarly sources and often provide detailed bibliographical information.[15]

Self-Ridicule and Self-Contradiction

As will be shown below, a considerable number of Byron's self-annotations facetiously interrupt lofty passages in his poems and sometimes even directly contradict the annotated text. Was this a common practice in the Romantic age, or is Byron an outlier? There are indeed some authors (e.g. Scott, Southey, and Moore) who also used their notes to 'correct' the main text, usually by conscientiously acknowledging whenever they had had recourse to poetic licence in their poems. While this helped them to portray themselves as experts in their subject matter, it also to some extent undermines the authority and verisimilitude of their poems. In Scott's case, we sometimes even find annotations that make fun of the narrators and characters in his works. In the context of discussing Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, John H. Alexander argues that the practice of drawing attention to factual mistakes or a speaker's follies often creates a certain tension between the poem and the notes. The annotations

> offer a tone and viewpoint very different from that of the Minstrel-narrator in the poem. […] [T]he simplified psychology and motivation of the poem is contrasted in the notes with a more complex and objective assessment or a contrary view of the same material. (Alexander 166; 168)

However, – and this is acknowledged by Alexander (cf. 176) – such annotations are quite rare, not only in Scott but also in Romantic-era literature in general. On the whole, self-annotations in Byron's age usually support, rather than call into question, the main text. What is more, juxtapositions of solemn passages and facetious notes are almost entirely absent from the works of Byron's contemporaries. The great (Pre-Romantic) exception is Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Here, the alleged 'editor' occasionally uses notes to explicitly ridicule the protagonists' letters. For instance, in part one, letter 65, the annotator at one point condescendingly remarks:

> I am hard pressed to know how this anonymous lover, of whom it is said later that he is not yet twenty-four, was able to sell a house, not being of age. These Letters are so full of similar absurdities that I shall no longer mention them; it is enough to have called attention to them. (Rousseau 152)

15 Byron's tendency to tease his readers with hints at autobiographical revelations in his notes will be discussed in chapter 3.2.1.

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Another example can be found in the first letter of part two, where the annotator comments: "I believe I hardly need to notify the reader that in this second part and the next, the two separated Lovers do nothing but rave and wander about; they have lost their poor heads" (Rousseau 155).[16] As we will see, it is possible that Byron drew some inspiration from Rousseau when writing the annotations on *The Giaour*, though in Byron's case the partial subversion of the main text is not achieved through explicit criticism but only through the tonal discrepancy between the poem and some of the notes (see chapter 3.2.1.2).[17] Equally facetious notes for serious passages can be found in the first, second and fourth cantos of *CHP*, but many of them only appear in the manuscripts and were omitted in the published editions (see chapter 3.2.1.1). A humorous self-annotation on a lofty passage can also be found in *The Bride of Abydos* (see chapter 3.2.2). Furthermore, a note that ridicules the authorial persona is appended to *The Waltz* (see chapter 3.3.3), while "Lachin Y Gair" contains an annotation that contradicts the poem (see chapter 3.4.1). Thus, more than any other author of his age, Byron used his annotations for self-contradiction, self-subversion, and self-ridicule.

Editorial Fiction

Lastly, a few words on the convention of editorial fiction in the Romantic age and Byron's creative appropriation of it. The term "editorial fiction" refers to works that pretend that they are merely editions of authentic letters, manuscripts, spoken discourse, songs, etc. that the alleged editor found or – in the two latter cases – overheard. Writers thus use editorial fiction to suggest that they are not the real authors of a text but merely its editors (cf. Konrad 3). During Byron's time (and the same also goes for the Augustan age), most editorial

16 The notes for Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* are discussed in detail by Yannick Séité in *Du livre au lire*; for an analysis of the ironic notes, see especially 306–12. According to Séité, Rousseau strategically used the notes to prevent readers from becoming too emotionally involved in the narrative (cf. Séité 325). The numerous negative reactions to Rousseau's facetious notes (quoted by Séité 306–07) sound very similar to reviewers' complaints about Byron's annotations for *The Giaour*.

17 This practice may also have been partly inspired by two of Byron's non-literary models of self-annotation, i.e. Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* and Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon was fond of interrupting a highly dramatic passage in the main text with a pedantic or facetious discussion of bare facts (cf. Cosgrove 148). Likewise, Peter L. Thorslev argues that in their notes both Bayle and Byron sometimes take a critical stance towards their own work and its topics: "they seem like Olympian deities to 'laugh down from the heights' on the subjects of their discourse" (Thorslev 70). The influence of Bayle's notes on Byron is also discussed by Pomarè in chapter 2 of her study *Byron and the Discourses of History*.

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fictions did not fool any reader; they had become sufficiently conventionalised as a literary genre. True, Macpherson succeeded for a brief time in presenting his Ossian poems as authentic ancient texts, but, in the case of Beckford's *Vathek*, for example, most readers and reviewers immediately saw through the fiction of the 'found manuscript'.[18]

At the beginning of his career, Byron's later friend Thomas Moore presented himself as the mere editor and annotator of another's work in order to conceal his authorship. In the anonymously published *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq.* many of the short annotations are employed to maintain the fiction that the volume was published by a 'T. M.' who was merely trying to elucidate the poems of his deceased friend. The ruse was, however, soon detected and commented on by reviewers.[19] Later in his career, Moore would use such faux-editorial annotations only for his satirical works. For instance, some of the notes in his poems *The Fudge Family in Paris, Edited by Thomas Brown, the Younger* and *Intercepted Letters, or, The Twopenny Postbag* playfully justify 'editorial choices' like leaving out some of the lines written by an intemperate young man and describe what else was 'found' in the intercepted parcels (a rejected manuscript, an invitation to a ball, etc.).

Another work relying on the fiction of the 'found manuscript' that Byron definitely knew is Samuel Rogers's *The Voyage of Columbus*. This poem is frequently believed to have inspired the interplay of the different voices in Byron's *The Giaour* (cf. Gleckner 91; McGann, *Fiery Dust* 142; Peterson 28–29; Seed 15). *The Voyage of Columbus* exists in two versions. In the first version (1810), the preface makes clear that the poem was written by a modern (anonymous) author. However, when *The Voyage of Columbus* was included in Rogers's *Poems* (1812), the poet – most likely in an attempt to make the rather insipid work more interesting – claimed that it was a translation of an old Castilian manuscript of which only fragments remain. Alleged gaps in the manuscript are indicated by rows of asterisks in the text and are sometimes addressed by an annotation. At the end of the second canto, for instance, a note deplores that "[t]his Canto seems to have suffered more than the rest" (Sam. Rogers 203). Rogers's notes, which substantiate his fiction of the 'found manuscript', thus

18 For instance, one review of *Vathek* in the *English Review* (vol. 8, Sep. 1786) notes that "[i]n an age that has abounded so much with literary impostures, we confess that we cannot see the propriety of such a palpable fiction. The general strain of the work, and the many allusions to modern authors, indicate the work to be an [sic] European" ("Review of *Vathek*" 181).

19 See, for example, reviews of *Thomas Little* in *The British Critic* (vol. 18, Nov. 1801), *The Poetical Register* (vol. 1, Jan. 1802), and *The Critical Review* (vol. 34, Feb. 1802).

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emphasise the presence of two distinct voices in the work: the author of the old manuscript and the modern translator/editor.

The examples of Beckford, Moore, and Rogers show that in Byron's time annotated editorial fiction was quite popular, albeit rather as a transparent literary device than as a genuine attempt to conceal one's authorship. As will be seen, what differentiates Byron's *The Giaour* and *Don Juan*[20] from the works by Beckford, Moore, and Rogers is that in neither of them it is entirely obvious that they are editorial fictions in the first place. In *The Giaour*, the annotation that tells readers that the poem consists of an 'overheard tale' interspersed with a few additions by the 'editor' only occurs at the very end of the poem. And in *Don Juan*, the preface that likewise presents the poem as an 'overheard story' with editorial interpolations was cancelled before publication. As I will show, this delay or omission of the markers of editorial fiction sometimes leads to a confusion of voices and to uncertainty over who exactly is 'speaking' in the annotations as well as the annotated text, which, in turn, has wide-reaching consequences for the interpretation of the works as a whole (see chapter 3.2.1.2).

The examples of Romantic self-annotation discussed here show the prevalence and diversity of this practice around 1800 and hint at why Byron is an especially intriguing case to study. Among all of his contemporaries, his annotations deviate the farthest from the conventions of xenographic annotation, and his notes are characterised by constant authorial self-insertions (as well as by insertions that again raise the question whether it is really Byron that is speaking). He uses annotations to contradict, undermine, and mock his own poems much more frequently than any of his fellow Romantic authors. And he employs the popular device of the 'overheard story' for purposes that go far beyond the transparent play with different voices; rather, the 'delayed' editorial fiction in *The Giaour* and the resulting ambiguity of which parts of the text can be attributed to which speaker lie at the very heart of the work's meaning.

20 In the cancelled preface to *Don Juan*, Byron facetiously suggests that the poem should be read as an example of editorial fiction. The beginning of his preface quotes Wordsworth who asked his readers to imagine that his poem "The Thorn" is spoken by the Captain of a small trading vessel. Afterwards, Byron requests his own readers "to suppose by a like exertion of Imagination – that the following epic Narrative is told by a Spanish Gentleman[.] [...] Having supposed as much of this as the utter impossibility of such a supposition will admit – the reader is requested to extend his supposed power of supposing so far as to conceive that the dedication to Mr. Southey – & several stanzas of the poem itself are interpolated by the English Editor" (Preface to *Don Juan* Canto 1; *CPW* 5: 81).

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3.1.2 (*How*) *Were Self-Annotations Read?*

In his 1819 *Grammar of the English Language*, William Cobbett claims: "Notes are seldom *read*" (83, original emphasis; also see Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 641).[21] Basing my argument on authors' correspondence, reviews, and other contemporary sources, I will explain why this statement is wrong, at least with regard to Romantic-era self-annotations for poetry. After having established that annotations were indeed read by Byron's contemporaries, I will draw on authors' remarks to discuss *how* they were read or at least how they were assumed to be read: did readers immediately turn to the notes whenever they found an asterisk or a superscript number in the poem? Or did they first read the whole poem and then pay attention to the annotations in a second reading?

Authors' correspondence in the Romantic age reveals that they showed considerable interest in the notes of other writers as well as in the reception of their own. Self-annotations even seem to have been a topic for lively conversation, at least in literary circles. For example, Byron's friend Hobhouse wrote to him in October 1810 to tell him of a discussion that one of his notes in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (*EBSR*) had given rise to:

> Only think of that ninny Ekenhead! When he was reading the Satire [*EBSR*] and came to that note where you talk about Haley and call him Mr. H. he said 'ah ah so he has got a slap at you too,' and, I fancy, he thinks that Mr. H means Mr. Hobhouse to this moment. (Hobhouse 51)

Another annotation in *EBSR* stirred up quite some controversy and almost led to a duel between Byron and Thomas Moore, who would later become one of his closest friends. Moore believed that Byron accused him of cowardice in an annotation on Moore's duel with the reviewer Francis Jeffrey (*EBSR* 465–67n; *CPW* 1: 407). He wrote an indignant letter to Byron on 1 January 1810 (which Byron did not receive before going abroad) and, upon not having received an answer, sent another letter on 22 October 1811 (T. Moore, *Letters* 1: 134–35; 1: 161–61). The matter was concluded without bloodshed, but it illustrates that annotations were indeed taken quite seriously.

Wordsworth, Southey, and Scott were also avid readers of annotations. In a letter to Anna Eliza Bray on 8 September 1832, Southey proudly relates how he found his name in a note:

> To my no little surprise, I once came upon this sentence in the notes to an Italian poem by Pananti: 'Si avrebbe potuto nominare il famoso poeta Southey, gran

21 For a comprehensive collection of (Pre)Romantic attitudes to annotations (most of them, however, to *xenographic* annotations), see Edson, "Introduction" xxi–xxiii.

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> viaggiatore a piedi.' How I deserved to be thus immortalised I do not know. (Southey, *Sel. Letters* 4: 299–300)[22]

In a letter to Scott, Wordsworth chides him for having misquoted him in his notes on *Marmion*: "In the notes you have quoted two lines of mine from memory, and your memory admirable as it is, has here failed you" (W. Wordsworth, *Letters 1806–1811* 264). Scott himself even occasionally advised his correspondents to read a poem for its annotations only. In a letter to Patrick Murray on 18 January 1812, he announces that he will send him Edward Pellews's *Catalonia* and explains: "the notes contain some curious information which is the reason I send it. The bard seems to me however to croak a little too much" (W. Scott, *Letters* 3: 67).

Byron himself read annotations quite carefully as well. He even refers to them in his own notes, quoting an annotation from the *Nouvelle Héloïse* in a note on the third canto of *CHP* and Southey's *Thalaba* note on vampires in an annotation for *The Giaour* (cf. *CHP* 3.99n, *Giaour* 755n; *CPW* 2: 311–13, *CPW* 3: 420). Furthermore, in his review of William Henry Ireland's *Neglected Genius* in the *Monthly Review* (vol. 70, Feb. 1813), Byron ridicules the author for committing a blunder in his annotations: "The notes communicate, among other novelties, the new title of 'Sir Horace' to the Honourable H. Walpole" (*CMP* 19). Despite his complaints about having to write more annotations for *CHP* I–II (cf. *BLJ* 2: 111), Byron usually seems to have been quite protective of his notes and became enraged whenever John Murray published them with errors or even failed to include them in the first place: "The *Notes* you can't have lost – you acknowledged them[.] […] And now I ask once more if such liberties taken in a man's absence – are fair or praise-worthy?" (*BLJ* 8: 194, original emphasis). Byron also objected when he learned that Murray planned a separate publication for the hundreds of pages of annotations that John Cam Hobhouse had written for the fourth canto of *CHP* and that Byron wanted to include in the same volume as his poem. In a letter to Hobhouse, he complains: "You have vexed me mightily about *your notes* on which I depend seriously […] however you must do as you like – only recollect that I *protest* against withholding the notes – & look upon myself as an ill used Gentleman" (*BLJ* 6: 19, original emphasis).

Publishers apparently were aware of the fact that annotations were indeed perused by many readers and that the bookseller could get in trouble for them. For example, in 1826, William Miller claimed that the main reason why he had refused to publish Byron's *CHP* in 1812 was that its notes satirised Lord Elgin

22 "One could have mentioned the famous poet Southey, a great pedestrian" (my translation).

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(cf. Murray 472n5). Byron's publisher Murray himself sometimes unauthorisedly left out annotations on account of their political sentiments. Writing to Byron in January 1817, he justifies this practice by alluding to economic considerations, arguing that "[t]he Note omitted was I think some personal allusion to poor Louis XVIII – & this I desired lest it might in any way interfere with the popularity of my book" (Murray 202, original emphasis).

Many critics also paid close attention to the notes and included them in their evaluation. A review of *Marino Faliero* in the *Literary Gazette* (no. 223, 28 Apr. 1821), for instance, announces: "Before examining the play […] in detail, we must offer a few comments upon the preface and notes which accompany it" ("Review of *Marino Faliero*" 259). Usually, however, the paragraph about the notes appears at the very end of a review; it often comments on the usefulness and appropriateness of the information and points out factual mistakes in the annotations. For example, in its review of the first two cantos of *CHP* (vol. 19, no. 38, Feb. 1812), the *Edinburgh Review* comments:

> The Notes are written in a flippant, lively, *tranchant* and assuming style – neither very deep nor very witty; though rather entertaining, and containing some curious information as to the character and qualifications of the modern Greeks; of whom, as well as of the Portuguese, Lord Byron seems inclined to speak much more favourably in prose than in verse. ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*"475)[23]

And when discussing Byron's *The Siege of Corinth*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Mar. 1816) explains that "[w]e copy the following exquisite lines on account of the accompanying note" before quoting the entire annotation ("Review of *The Siege of Corinth*" 242; for the note, see *Siege of Corinth* 598n; *CPW* 3: 486). The *Critical Review* (vol. 1, no. 6, June 1812) even complains that the more than fifty pages of annotations in *CHP* I–II "are much too sparing[] for our wishes" and, after having spent two pages criticising the information Byron provides in his appendix, even feels the need to justify that it "estimated the volume now before us, rather with reference to its poetical merits than the information it conveys" ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II" 572; 575). The practice of reviewers commenting on annotations was not restricted to British journals. For example, the review of Byron's *The Bride of Abydos* in the *Wiener Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (no. 26, Apr. 1814) spends a whole page on Byron's annotations and especially focuses on his compliment to Madame de Staël in one of them:

23 The 'tonal mismatch' between the poem and some of the notes in *CHP* is discussed in chapter 3.2.1.1.

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> An manchen Stellen scheint sogar der Text nur um der Noten willen da zu stehen. […] *The music breathing from her face*, hätte in einem deutschen, und vielleicht auch in einem englischen Gedichte keiner Note bedurft, wenn es dem Verf. nicht darum zu thun gewesen wäre, der Frau von Staël […] eine artige Verbeugung zu machen. ("Review of *The Bride of Abydos*" 424, original emphasis)[24]

There is not much information about whether 'ordinary' readers were just as interested in annotations as authors and reviewers. Yet, for example, the anonymously published *Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature* (1810, ascribed to a Thomas Green, who does not make an appearance in literature elsewhere) frequently records the author's opinions of the notes (xenographic and authorial) that he read. Even readers who could not afford to buy books in their (often very expensive)[25] 'official' versions still had access to the texts and their annotations via other means: pirated editions in Britain and Galignani's continental reprints of British works usually retained the annotations.[26] It appears that most translations likewise kept the author's annotations.[27] Reviews in periodicals like the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine*, and many others generally included long quotes from the reviewed poem and often reprinted the annotations attached to these quotes in their entirety.[28] Thus, at least to some extent, self-annotations were not only acces-

24 "In some instances, the text seems to be written only for the sake of the notes. […] *The music breathing from her face* would not have necessitated a note in a German poem – maybe not in an English one either – had the author not wanted to make a polite bow to Madame de Staël" (my translation, original emphasis). For a discussion of this note, see chapter 3.2.2.2.

25 A bound quarto copy of the first two cantos of *CHP* cost 50 shillings, half the weekly income of a gentleman (cf. O'Connell 86–87; St. Clair, "The Impact of Byron's Writings" 4).

26 See, for example, the pirated *Don Juan, An Exact Copy from the Quarto Edition*, published in 1819 by J. Onwhyn, which cost four shillings. The compilers of commonplace books (i.e. personal collections of extracts from different texts), however, frequently did *not* transcribe the annotations (cf. Colclough 129). Nevertheless, commonplacers sometimes "physically cut the poem out of the periodical to stick in their album" (Throsby 237); it is not inconceivable that they sometimes also cut out particularly interesting or witty annotations.

27 A German translation of Byron's *The Giaour – Der Gjaur: Bruchstück einer Türkischen Erzählung* (1820) – even included notes in which the translator comments on, and corrects, Byron's annotations. The 1828 French translation *Le giaour, fragmens d'un conte turc* faithfully includes all of Byron's notes. A Swedish and a Dutch translation – *Giaourn, fragment af en turkisk bërattelse* (1830) and *De Gjouwer* (1840) – reproduce many of Byron's notes faithfully, shorten others, and add xenographic notes by the translators. (The four translations mentioned here are listed as *De Gjouwer, Der Gjaur, Le Giaour*, and *Giaourn* in the Works Cited.)

28 Contemporary publishers apparently did not see these long quotes as copyright violations that might endanger their sales numbers. The *Quarterly Review*, which was owned

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sible to the purchasers of the authentic editions but to a much larger audience. Whether an annotation was read (and by whom) would also, of course, have depended on its length and subject. For example, as Gillian Hughes rightly points out,

> Scott's notes seem designed for a more specific constituency than the poems themselves, one of gentlemanly scholars apparently, since they include untranslated Latin as well as quotations from manuscripts and obscure pamphlets in private libraries, medieval Scottish literary texts with original spelling, old charters and legal records and the like. (Hughes 54)

A brief, witty, and risqué note for *Don Juan* would probably have appealed to a different (and wider?) readership than the lengthy historical appendices for *The Two Foscari*.

After having established that many (perhaps even most) contemporary readers indeed paid eager attention to the notes, it remains to be discussed *how* people read annotations. Information on this issue is quite scarce, and individual preferences and habits would, of course, also have played a role. Nevertheless, some tendencies emerge from authors' correspondences, prefaces, and the layout of the annotations. It appears that many readers first finished the whole poem before taking heed of the annotations in a second, more thorough reading.[29] For instance, in a letter to John May on 12 October 1808, Southey complains that, since his long annotations in *Thalaba* are printed as footnotes and only leave space for a few lines of poetry on the page, those who first want to focus on the poem itself have to flip the pages constantly: "There is an unpleasant effect by the manner of placing the notes; for many pages have only a line of text, and so the eye runs faster than the fingers can turn them over" (Southey, *Coll. Letters* 3: letter 1518). Thus, Southey apparently expected readers to disregard the footnotes initially and only to read the poem. In his satire *The Pursuits of Literature*, Thomas James Mathias even advises his readers to peruse the poem in this manner: "I think, if the Poem is read once without reference to the notes, the plan, connection, and manner of it will

by Byron's publisher Murray, for example, contains many long quotes in its review of Byron's *The Giaour* ("Review of *The Giaour*", vol. 10, no. 20, Jan. 1814).

29 However, commenting on the annotations in Gray's *The Bard*, Percival Stockdale suggests that readers usually alternate between poem and notes even in a first reading: by the presence of footnotes, "the flow, and warmth of the reader's mind, […] is checked and broken, whenever He is obliged to consult the Anecdotes at the bottom of the page: and after this interruption He recovers not, even with the assistance of the Notes, that ardour which a well-written Poem should not only inspire, but maintain" (Stockdale 104–05; also see Edson, "Introduction" xxii).

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be perceived" (Mathias 2). In the preface to his translation of the satires of Juvenal, Francis Hodgson (a close friend of Byron's) explains that this is also how he prefers to read an annotated work.[30] Nevertheless, he owns that it is almost impossible to ignore footnotes:

> I confess that I like to read a poem quite through before I examine it in detail. We must compound for a little temporary ignorance of the full meaning of particular passages by this method: but pleasure is the great end of poetry; and it is impossible to judge of the general effect of a poem, if our attention is called off every moment to quotation and reference in the notes. This must be the case, if they are at the bottom of the page. There is a sort of compulsion in the plan; a reader is forced by his natural curiosity to look for an explanation before his eyes, although in many passages he may have no occasion, or wish to seek for more knowledge than he finds in the text, or can supply from his own stores of information. (Hodgson iv; cf. Edson, "Introduction" xxiii)

As I show in my appendix (p. 391 and p. 395ff.), the layout of self-annotated works in the Romantic age often catered to readers' preference for first focussing on the poem itself. After 1800, intrusive and hard-to-ignore footnotes were increasingly supplanted by endnotes which could be more easily disregarded in a first reading. Around 1820, more than 60 % of English self-annotated poetry featured either endnotes or a mix of foot- and endnotes. In works that combined footnotes and endnotes, the former are usually very brief and provide information that is essential for understanding the poem (e.g. translations of foreign words), while the endnotes are often very long. In many of these works, the poem itself contains no indications (e.g. asterisks or superscript numbers) that would draw readers' attention to the presence of the

30 One of the most famous and often-quoted discussions of annotations in the eighteenth century, found in Johnson's preface to his Shakespeare edition (1765), makes a similar point: "Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the powers of Shakespeare, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. […] And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators. Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied" (S. Johnson, *Johnson on Shakespeare* 111).

Johnson's preface is often cited as an argument against reading (and writing) annotations altogether. However, it seems that it rather offers advice on *how* and *when* to use them (cf. also Edson, "Introduction" xxi).

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endnotes. This is yet another hint that readers were expected to initially peruse the entire poem without referring to the notes.

The practice of first reading the poem as whole and then rereading it with reference to the notes corresponds to what William St. Clair observes about reading practices in the Romantic age in general: "the same texts were still read many times over. Sometimes the books were re-read because nothing different was available, but for many readers, frequent re-reading was a conscious choice" (St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 395).

The question how and when readers encountered an annotation must be kept in mind when contemplating the effect of the annotations that will be discussed in the course of this study. In the case of *The Giaour*, for example, a crucial piece of information (namely that the greatest part of the poem consists of an 'authentic' Levantine tale 'overheard' by the English editor) is only given in the very last annotation. If readers read the work three times – first only the poem, then the poem with the notes, then the poem and the notes having in mind the last annotation – they would be confronted with three different communicative situations in each reading.

Self-annotations were indeed the 'modern indispensables' of rhyme in the Romantic age. They were thoroughly researched and discussed by authors, perused and animatedly commented on by many readers, and evaluated by national and international journals. As such, this understudied (para)textual feature deserves more attention than it has received so far.

3.2 Mimicking Explanatory Notes in Byron

3.2.1 *Personal Annotations: Creating and Undermining the Idea of the 'Real' Byron*

Throughout his career, Byron both hinted at and denied resemblances between himself and his characters or narrators.[31] He invited readers to identify him with his "beings of the mind" and berated them for doing so – often in such a teasingly half-hearted manner that the refutations began to resemble confirmations. In the preface to the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (*CHP*), for example, Byron informs readers that

> [w]ith regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated

31 For general studies of Romantic autobiography, see Treadwell *passim*; Stelzig (ed.), *Romantic Autobiography in England*; and Stelzig, "Autobiography and Confession".

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> from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's 'Citizen of the World', whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined, that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether. (*CPW* 2: 122)

While Byron contends that there was indeed a clear separation between himself and Harold in the first three cantos,[32] the reference to Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* again calls this into question. Goldsmith's work claims to be written by a Chinese traveller, who was quite obviously only a fictional author persona through whom Goldsmith commented on contemporary English society. Thus, by referring to *The Citizen of the World* in order to deny the connection between himself and Harold, Byron playfully insists on it even more; he suggests that the distinction between Harold and himself is almost as implausible as the distinction between Lien Chi and Goldsmith.[33] Furthermore, the preface partly confirms that, at least in the fourth canto, readers can indeed equate author and protagonist. (However, Byron does not specify whether this is merely due to his annoyance at readers' (mis)interpretation of the poem or because Harold had actually been a stand-in for himself all along.) Similar equivocalities can be found in the preface for *The Corsair*:

> With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I

32 In the preface to the first and second cantos, however, the identity between Byron and the Childe is likewise both suggested and denied. It explains that "[t]he following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. […] A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connection to the piece […]. It has been suggested to me by friends […] that in this fictitious character, 'Childe Harold,' I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim – Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated. In some very trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, I should hope, none whatever" (*CPW* 2: 3–4). In the addition to the preface for *CHP* I–II, Byron refers to the "'vagrant Childe,' (whom, notwithstanding many hints to the contrary, I still maintain to be a fictitious personage)", without clarifying whether he himself included these hints in the work or whether he refers to readers and reviewers (mistakenly) hinting at the fact that Harold might be Byron's alter ego (*CPW* 2: 5).

33 For another statement that denies the similarities between Byron and his characters or narrators before facetiously calling this very denial into question, see his unpublished letter to *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine* (1820) (cf. *CMP* 90; 93).

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> have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so – if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of 'drawing from self', the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable; and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining[.] (*CPW* 3: 149)

Byron refuses to outright deny any resemblances between his heroes and himself. Rather, he puts the interpretative onus on his audience, while still asserting that they will never be able to resolve the question, because (1) he himself is (allegedly) unsure about the matter, and (2) even if he *were* sure that there are no similarities, he would have "little interest in undeceiving" the public.

As these quotes from two of his prefaces indicate, Byron constantly raises questions that he then refuses to answer unequivocally: which (if any) of the events that are related in his poems are based on his own life? Can readers discover the genuine thoughts and feelings of the author by reading his works? And if yes, *which* of his works – *Lara* or *Beppo*, *CHP* or *Don Juan*?

Contemporary readers reacted in quite different ways to the ambiguities that surrounded the potentially autobiographical and self-revelatory aspects of Byron's works. For instance, in letters written within only a few weeks in 1816, Walter Scott took three contradictory positions on the matter: (1) all of Byron's works contain genuine self-expression, and all of his heroes are more or less identical with him;[34] (2) his melancholy and misanthropy used to be a pose in all of his earlier works, but in *CHP* III they are sincere;[35] and (3), rather than art imitating life, life is imitating art in Byron's case.[36] Other contempo-

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34 "I question whether there ever lived a man who, without looking abroad for subjects excepting as they produced an effect on himself, has contrived to render long poems turning almost entirely upon the feelings, character, and emotions of the author" (W. Scott, *Letters* 4: 297). "Almost all characters from Harold to Alp Arselan are more or less Lord Byron himself" (W. Scott, *Letters* 4: 307–08).

35 Scott relates that he "was not much moved by the sort of scorn of the world which [Byron's] first poems implied because I know it is a humour of mind which those whom fortune has spoild [sic] by indulgence or irritated by reverses are apt to assume and which a man of genius sometimes may be tempted to assume because it looks melancholy and gentlemanlike and becomes a bard as well as being desperately in love or very fond of the sun-rise tho he lies in bed till nine or anxious in recommending to others to catch cold by visiting old Abbies by moonlight which he never happend to see under the chaste moonbeam himself" (W. Scott, *Letters* 4: 300). The third canto of *CHP*, however, is not a pose; it "intimates a terrible state of mind" and raises fears that Byron might "end either in actual insanity or something equally frightful", i.e. suicide (W Scott, *Letters* 4: 300).

36 Byron has "Child Harolded himself and Outlawd himself into too great a resemblance with the pictures of his imagination" (W. Scott, *Letters* 4: 234). Scott's uncertainty whether

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raries claimed that the mystery could be cleared up easily: for example, in *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* (1821), John Gibson Lockhart famously asserts that the persona that Byron assumed from *CHP* onwards until the publication of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* was a complete sham.[37] While Lockhart dissociates Byron from his Byronic heroes, he suggests that *Don Juan* is indeed a work of genuine self-expression: "Stick to Don Juan: It is the only sincere thing you have ever written" (Lockhart, *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* 82). One *can* detect the 'real' Byron in his works, Lockhart suggests – one only has to read the right poem. However, as Lockhart points out in his *Letter*, even after the publication of the first cantos of *Don Juan*, many readers continued to insist that the 'real' Byron was a brooding, world-weary misanthrope like Harold, Conrad, Lara, and Manfred.[38] The controversy did not end with the poet's death. As Jerome McGann has pointed out, "the whole history of Byron research shows a constant struggle between those who praise him for his poetic sincerity, and those who damn him for his insincerity" (McGann, *Fiery Dust* 26).

'Sincerity', Autobiographical Factuality, and 'Personal' Annotations

As the discussion below will show, it is important to differentiate this notion of sincerity from that of (autobiographical) factuality. A passage that is (rightly or wrongly) seen as expressing the author's actual feelings and attitudes would

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the melancholic 'Byron' of the poems is a fashionable pose, a genuine manifestation of the author, or a fiction that has become reality, might, of course, also reflect a wish to tell each correspondent whatever Scott assumed he/she would like to hear. Even if this were the case, the fact that he possibly felt the need to take three different positions to cater to different correspondents' preconceptions would still show that contemporary readers were unsure whether or not they could equate Byron and his characters.

37 "The whole of your misanthropy […] is humbug. You do not hate men, 'no, nor woman neither,' but you thought it would be a fine, interesting thing for a handsome young Lord to depict himself as a dark-souled, melancholy, morbid being, and you have done so, it must be admitted, with exceeding cleverness. In spite of all your pranks, (Beppo, &c. Don Juan included,) every boarding-school in the empire still contains many devout believers in the amazing misery of the black-haired, high-browed, blue-eyed, bare-throated, Lord Byron" (Lockhart, *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* 80).

38 In 1821, for example, Byron himself told Moore that he had met a young American, who "did not take quite so much to me, from his having expected to meet a misanthropical gentleman, in wolf-skin breeches, and answering in fierce monosyllables, instead of a man of the world" (*BLJ* 8: 146). Likewise, a review of *CHP* III in *The Portfolio, Political and Literary* (vol. 1, no. 4, 23 Nov. 1816) argued that "[i]ndeed it is the real romance of his life, immeasurably more than the fabled one of his pen, which the public expects to find in his pages, and which not so much engages its sympathy, as piques its curiosity, and feeds thought and conversation" ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* III" 73).

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be called sincere,[39] while a passage that is (again, rightly or wrongly) seen as being directly drawn from the author's life experience would be called (autobiographically) factual. Readers could, for instance, argue that Byron's description of Conrad in *The Corsair* is not autobiographically factual (Byron was, after all, no pirate) but that it is 'sincere' (i.e. that Byron expresses his own feelings of pride, disillusion, and misanthropy through Conrad).

The quotes by Scott and Lockhart show that readers formed widely divergent judgements about both the sincerity and the factuality of Byron's works. As hinted at by the quotes from Byron's prefaces above, there is a clear textual basis for these contradictory assessments. They are a direct result of readers' attempts at coming to terms with (or explaining away) one of the fundamental ambiguities of Byron's œuvre.

In what follows, I will discuss the central role that Byron's self-annotations play in this ambiguity. More specifically, I will investigate how he uses his notes to both support and undermine the impression that his works are to a great extent autobiographically factual and that they serve his sincere and unrestrained self-expression. To this end, I will focus on his 'personal' annotations. The term here refers to notes that connect passages in the poem to Byron's first-hand observations and experiences as well as to notes that suggest that he is recording his own opinions or feelings in the poem and/or the annotations. In some cases (see chapter 3.2.1.3), these 'personal' notes also relate autobiographical anecdotes that are more or less unrelated to the annotated passage. Throughout the chapter, it will be shown that self-annotations are especially suited for ambiguating the autobiographical and self-revelatory aspect of a work due to their own ambiguous status: they are both fictional parts of a fictional text that are potentially voiced by a fictional persona *and* factual remarks standing outside a (semi-?)fictional text that are potentially voiced by the actual author.

To approach Byron's personal annotations as a means of ambiguation may seem a bit surprising. Based on his pronouncements on the importance of

39 Also see Angela Esterhammer's definition of sincerity: it is the "correspondence between (inner) reality and (outward) appearance" (Esterhammer 101). Her perceptive observation that sincerity is "inimical to performativity" (102) and yet has to be performed, i.e. that the very attempt at publicly communicating one's sincerity imperils this very sincerity, will be of particular relevance in chapter 3.2.1.3.

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factuality[40] and first-hand observation in poetry,[41] one would expect that most of these notes mainly serve as a way of disambiguating his poems by suggesting that they are more or less based on incidents that he witnessed in person. And indeed, while the notes of many other Romantic writers mainly rely on book-learning (occasionally mixed with first-hand accounts) (see chapter 3.1.1), Byron's notes often do not refer to any written sources but solely to his personal experience.[42] In other words, while most other Romantic poets signal

40 As Anne Barton points out, Byron was notorious for his "almost pedantic concern for truth in his descriptions" and for his disdain for writers who got historical or cultural details wrong (Barton 16). One need only think of his comment on Wordsworth's inaccurate description of a Turkish cemetery ("this is pure stuff") or his annotation in *CHP*, requesting Sydney Owenson "to have the goodness to marry her [the heroine of her next novel] to somebody more of a gentleman than a 'Disdar Aga' (who by the by is not an Aga)" (*BLJ* 4: 325; *CHP* 2.73n, Paper I n; *CPW* 2: 199). He famously claimed to "hate things *all fiction*" and argued that reading the *Iliad* would give him "no delight" if he did not believe it to be the "truth of *history* (in the material *facts*) and of *place*" (*BLJ* 5: 203; 8: 22, original emphasis).

As might be expected, Byron was very fond of insisting on the cultural and historical correctness of his own poems. For instance, enraged by his publisher Murray's doubts whether he was correct in having a Muslim character mention Cain in *The Bride of Abydos*, Byron retorted: "I don't care one lump of Sugar for my *poetry* – but for my *costume* and my *correctness* on those points […] I will combat lustily" (*BLJ* 3: 165, original emphasis). He was similarly indignant when a reviewer argued that Conrad's behaviour in *The Corsair* was unrealistic (cf. *BLJ* 4: 95; "Review of *The Corsair*", *Critical Review* vol. 5, iss. 2, Feb. 1814, 144–145). In both of these cases Byron used self-annotations to affirm the truthfulness of his descriptions (cf. *Bride of Abydos* 2.204n; *CPW* 3: 440; *Corsair* 3.696n; *CPW* 3: 449).

41 For instance, Byron claimed that he "could not write upon any thing, without some personal experience and foundation" (*BLJ* 5: 14). Likewise, when Murray suggested that Byron should compose a poem about Jerusalem, he responded (perhaps with a tinge of irony): "how the devil should I write about *Jerusalem* – never having yet been there?" (*BLJ* 5: 139, original emphasis). Byron was proud of the first-hand knowledge that fed into his works and argued that it was the most important difference between him and other authors. He asserted, for example, that when writing about Venice his main advantage over Otway and Shakespeare was that "of having been at Venice – and enterd [sic] into the local Spirit of it" (*BLJ* 7: 194). He also claimed that *The Bride of Abydos* "is my story and my *East* – (& here I am venturing with no one to contend against – from having *seen* what my contemporaries must copy from the drawings of others only[)]" (*BLJ* 3: 168, original emphasis).

42 Even in the few cases in which Byron refers to written sources, he is usually decidedly unacademic and only cites the title of the work and the name of the author, giving neither the edition, nor the chapter, nor the page number. We also sometimes find information like "I quote from memory" (*Island* 3.334n; *CPW* 7: 148; cf. *Don Juan* 1.88n; *CPW* 5: 677) and the combination of bibliographical and biographical information as in "No. 31 of the Edinburgh Review (given to me the other day by the captain of an English frigate off Salamis)" (*Hints from Horace* 586var n; *CPW* 1: 438).

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that they thoroughly researched the scenes they are describing, Byron assures readers that he actually *saw* them. For instance, he explains that the buskins worn by some characters in *The Bride of Abydos* "are those of an Arnaut robber, who was my host (he had quitted the profession)" (*Bride of Abydos* 2.150n; *CPW* 2: 440), and he affirms that the depiction of Haidée's hair being so long as to reach her ankles is no exaggeration but was inspired by his having seen four women "who possessed their hair in this profusion" (*Don Juan* 3.73n; *CPW* 5: 699). Byron's assertions that the general descriptions in his poems are based on personal experience may lead readers to go a step further and to assume that the events portrayed in the works as well as the protagonists' feelings and opinions are likewise based on Byron's own life and character.

At this point, however, annotatorial ambiguation begins to play a role since there are a considerable number of personal notes that call this impression of autobiography and self-revelation into question. While affirming that Byron personally witnessed some of the scenes he is describing in his poems, these notes insinuate that the *attitude* that the character or narrator expresses towards these scenes is *not* necessarily Byron's and that he perhaps also made certain changes when transforming fact into fiction. In other words, these notes imply that his poems may to some extent be grounded in his own experiences but that this does not mean that these works serve his 'sincere' self-expression nor that the events described in them are faithful to what actually happened in Byron's life.

This sense is often achieved by juxtaposing a melancholic, lofty poetical passage and an irreverent or sceptical note. Personal annotations of this kind suggest that the poems may indeed tell readers something about Byron's first-hand geographical, cultural, or religious knowledge but by no means paint a 'sincere' or complete picture of his thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In Byron's never-ending game of teasing readers with hints at the potentially self-revelatory nature of his poems, the combinations of serious passages and comical notes thus give rise to questions like: might the 'real' Byron perhaps

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There are, of course, exceptions to Byron's unscholarliness, e.g. the lengthy note at the end of *The Corsair* mentioned above, the appendices to *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari*, and the detailed information on François de Bonnivard in a note for the "Sonnet on Chillon". (However, the appendices to his two Venetian dramas and the note on Bonnivard are yet again framed by personal explanations, i.e. Byron's observations on modern-day Venice and Chillon). That Byron could indeed be scholarly when he wanted to is shown in his exceedingly long note on Thomas Campbell's mistakes in the introduction to *Specimens of the British Poets* and Francis Bacon's blunders in his apophtegms (cf. *Don Juan* 5.147n; *CPW* 5: 710–13). Although Byron's observations on Bacon are so pedantic as to border on the parodic, his journal entries and his letters to Murray about them suggest that he was serious in this note (cf. *BLJ* 8: 14; 8: 194).

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be found in the annotations rather than the poem? Or does he just adopt yet another pose in them? Or – especially against the backdrop of his pronouncements on 'mobility' in *Don Juan* (see below) – does the blend of serious passages and comical annotations finally give readers a glimpse at the 'real' Byron in all his contradictoriness? As will be shown, a further aspect highlighted by these personal notes is that Byron often draws readers' attention to the fact that his poems and notes are at best half-revelatory, that he is always hiding more than he is revealing. Moreover, especially in the example drawn from *Don Juan* (see below), Byron's personal notes present themselves as both private reminiscences not meant for others' eyes *and* as public remarks in which the author is fully aware of his audience and might wish to project a certain (not necessarily faithful) image of himself for them.

Earlier Approaches to Byron's Ambiguous 'Sincerity' and Autobiographical Factuality

The aim here is, of course, not to reconstruct Byron's actual opinions and feelings on the basis of his self-annotations, or to determine how 'sincere' and/or factual his works really were.[43] The present chapter focuses exclusively on

43 For an unsuccessful attempt at determining the 'sincerity' of Byron's works, see Philip Martin's *Byron: A Poet Before his Public*, which, however, does not consider his self-annotations. Martin argues that Byron believed that the majority of his readers (especially from the middle class) "were incapable of recognizing literary distinctions" (37) and that they were "predominantly uninformed, or voluntarily undiscriminating" (39). For this reason, in all of his works before *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, Byron wrote deliberately bad poetry, only including here and there a few indications of his (in Martin's opinion) 'real' opinion of his works. The tonal inconsistencies in *CHP*, for example, "betray[] Byron's fundamental indifference towards his art and also evince[] an equal lack of regard for his readership" (26). Moreover, according to Martin, the oriental tales are written in a deliberately sensationalist, inept, and conventional style, which shows that Byron was making fun of his readers' inability to detect that their inferior quality is merely a joke (cf. 53; 61–62). It is only in *Beppo* and especially in *Don Juan* that Byron is able to free himself from the wish to project a certain 'Romantic' image of himself to his audience and to finally be 'sincere' (and a good poet) (cf. 184; 186).

As this brief summary shows, Martin relies on two rather bold presuppositions: firstly, that Byron's contemporary readers were an incompetent monolith who simply did not 'get' what he was trying to do and, secondly, that since Martin believes nearly all of Byron's works except *Don Juan* to be bad, Byron must have thought so as well. The first presupposition has convincingly been refuted by, among others, Tom Mole (who shows how Byron addresses very different readerships) and Jane Stabler (who delineates the complex ways in which Byron's contemporaries reacted to the tonal inconsistencies in his poems) (cf. Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 44–59; Stabler, *Byron, Poetics and History* 18–42). The second is a crass simplification of the highly contradictory and ambivalent attitudes that Byron's expressed towards his works throughout his career. Byron is, of course, partly

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the textual strategies through which he creates, and calls into question, the *illusion* of sincerity and autobiographical factuality.[44] In doing so, the chapter draws on a wealth of research, which has, however, often neglected the role that Byron's annotations play in his identification with, and distancing from, his characters and narrators. Previous scholarship has mainly concentrated on two points: (1) the co-presence of signals of sincerity and insincerity, self-revelation and self-concealment, in Byron's works; and (2) the question how Byron managed to convince readers that they were getting a glimpse of his real self in his earlier works, only to contest this conviction in his later ones.

With respect to the first issue, it has been argued that we can find in Byron's works a "radical dissolution of […] the dichotomies of authenticity and role-playing, of fiction and non-fiction, of fact and fake" (Bode, "Byron's Dis-Orientations" 73), as well as "a self-dramatisation or self-creation through combined self-revelation and self-concealment" (Graham 28). He offers his readers "'indirect' or 'staged' autobiography that so effectively melds personal revelation with fictionalizing as to render the one often indistinguishable from the other" (Behrendt 148). His poems are "a mode of presentation in which disguise and disclosure intermix" and present "a game of candour and obliquity" (Soderholm 184). This chapter will provide evidence for the central role that Byron's notes play in this hide-and-seek game with his readers.

The second question has been discussed in detail by Andrew Elfenbein and Tom Mole. Both of them argue that Byron used certain textual strategies in order to close the, according to them, widening gap between authors and readers around 1800 by suggesting to readers that his works provide them with a direct glimpse at his real life and feelings. Both Elfenbein and Mole attribute this gap to the decline of patronage- and subscription-based publication, the

himself to blame for the argument that his early works are just melodramatic, lackadaisical 'cash-grabs'. In a letter to P. B. Shelley, for example, he calls his earlier writings "the exaggerated nonsense which has corrupted the public taste" (*BLJ* 9: 161). This, of course, presents a marked contrast to comments like "I adhere (in liking) to my fragment [*The Giaour*]" (*BLJ* 3: 237) and the care he took in revising his oriental tales. Such contradictory statements about his works can be found throughout his letters. In the case of *Manfred*, for instance, he first told Murray that he had "no great opinion of this piece of phantasy" and that his publisher "may either throw it into the fire or not" (*BLJ* 5: 170) and later was enraged when Murray dared to omit a single line (cf. *BLJ* 5: 257).

44 The fact that the apparent 'sincerity' of parts of Byron's works relies on deliberate artistic methods is, for instance, stressed by Jerome McGann. He takes up Matthew Arnold's notion of the "*illusion* of sincerity created by art, an illusion that makes the dramatic 'personality' of Byron presented in his poetry seem fully and empirically 'real'" and concludes that "this 'personality' is a product of art and artifice" (McGann, *Fiery Dust* 26, original emphasis).

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rise in literacy and the growing number of readers, as well as to the increase in literary production (cf. Elfenbein 52–53; Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 10–23). The strategies identified by Elfenbein and Mole, however, vastly differ from each other. Elfenbein argues that readers chose to identify Byron with his characters because his poems "provided no origin [i.e. explanation] for the hero's torment" and thus forced readers to find this origin outside the works, in the author himself (Elfenbein 20). According to him, "Byron was equated with his heroes more because of what he did not tell than because of what he did" (Elfenbein 20). By contrast, Mole contends that, in order to ease the sense of alienation between author and audience, many Romantic poets (most prominently Byron himself) strove to create a "Hermeneutic of Intimacy". This worked by implying that their works

> could only be understood fully by referring to their author's personality, that reading them was entering a kind of relationship with the author and that that relationship resembled an intimate connection between individuals. (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 23)

The Hermeneutic of Intimacy thus relies on readers' "belief that Byron revealed himself in his poetry, though this revelation was never stable or complete" (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 24). In the course of his book, Mole discusses a variety of strategies through which this belief is created and cemented but also refuted in Byron's works.[45] While I agree with Mole and Elfenbein that Byron used certain textual strategies to (partly) create the impression that he could be equated with his protagonists and/or narrators, neither the reasons they name for the *need* for such an impression, nor the strategies they cite for achieving it, are entirely convincing.

For one, it is questionable whether the intimacy between authors and readers that, according to Mole and Elfenbein, was lost around 1800 ever existed in the first place. Even the annotations in Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, for example, are often seen as a way to mediate his innovative poem to readers who might otherwise have rejected the work (cf. A. Assmann 357); mass

45 For instance, he argues that the prefatory poem "To Ianthe" (added to *CHP* I–II in 1814) allowed "female readers [to] imagine their own readings in the intimate terms in which Ianthe's was presented" (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 58). Mole also stresses the fact that illustrations of Byron's protagonists were designed to resemble the author himself (25; 90), and he asserts that the oriental tales' insistence that faces can bear "traces of hidden crimes or sorrows" induced readers to try to read Byron's own face for hints of his thoughts and feelings (60–77). In his eighth chapter, Mole describes how *Don Juan* turns these notions on their head by constantly "disput[ing] the extent to which the interior was legible to onlookers" (143).

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production and consumption of literature were decried much earlier than in the Romantic age;[46] and even from Antiquity onwards authors were aware (or at least hoped) that their works would not only be read by contemporaries but by future readers, who might speak a different language, have a different horizon of understanding, and adhere to different values.[47]

With respect to the textual strategy identified by Elfenbein, it needs to be pointed out that Byron's heroes usually *do* have a background story to explain their mental anguish, though the poems often claim that some aspects of these background stories must be left untold.[48] Nevertheless, Elfenbein's argument that readers insisted that Byron's past and personality could be found in his poems more because of what he did *not* say than because of what he did is compelling. As I will show in the course of this chapter, many of Byron's personal annotations teasingly withhold information – not about his protagonists, however, but about himself. Making only minor autobiographical revelations, these notes hint at major ones, which they, however, dare not (or care not) to supply. By occasionally suggesting that the poems indeed contain traces of Byron's life and opinions, these annotations invite readers to search for other, unannotated, and potentially more weighty self-revelations.[49]

Moving on to Mole, his discussion sometimes seems to overstate the centrality of certain of Byron's textual strategies for creating the Hermeneutic of Intimacy. His discussion of *CHP* I–II, for instance, strongly focuses on the prefatory poem "To Ianthe", which was added to the work in 1814, i.e. two years after the first publication of *CHP*. By the time when this poem was added, however, many in Byron's audience were already quite convinced that he was confessing his innermost feelings in his works and that they were among the privileged

46 For example, in 1729, Pope bemoans that "Paper [...] became so cheap, and Printers so numerous, that a deluge of Authors covered the land" (*Dunciad* 70).

47 One need only think of the thirtieth poem of Horace's third book of the *Odes*, which contains the famous line "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" ('I have created a monument more lasting than bronze'). A similar hope is expressed at the end of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

48 For instance, Harold has become jaded by his own dissoluteness, the Giaour is tormented by his inability to save Leila, Conrad is still ruminating on a betrayal he suffered in youth, Lara (if we assume him to be Conrad under a new name, as the preface suggests) mourns Medora, and Manfred feels guilty about Astarte's death.

49 Even in his 'private' journals (for the non-privacy of which, see below), Byron followed a similar strategy. Referring to *The Corsair*, he records: Hobhouse "told me an odd report, – that *I* am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy [piracy?] Um! – people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth. H. don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any one – nor – nor – nor – however, it is a lie" (*BLJ* 3: 250, original emphasis, editor's addition in brackets).

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few who could understand these confessions. Hence, even though Mole's analysis of "To Ianthe" offers an insightful addition to discussions of the seemingly self-revelatory nature of Byron's works, it does not get to the core of the issue.

With regard to the poems themselves (i.e. disregarding the role of the paratexts), this core seems to consist of three components: (1) Many of Byron's narrative poems repeat key elements in the characterisation of his 'Byronic' protagonists, which suggests to readers that the author is obsessed with one specific type of hero (for reasons which they are left to imagine). (2) The next component consists of two steps. First, it relies on the strategy of partly identifying the narrators of his romances and tales with their protagonists, which is achieved in passages where narrators move from descriptions of the protagonists' feelings to reflections that hint at their own familiarity with such sentiments, e.g. "And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost, / In smiles that least befit who wear them most" (*Corsair* 3.638–39). And, second, the narrators' reflections in these passages often echo sentiments that readers would have known from Byron's lyrical (and seemingly confessional) poems, thereby suggesting that Byron and the narrators of his long narrative poems can (at least partially) be equated. For instance, the lines just quoted bear a great resemblance to his lyrical poem "If Sometimes in the Haunts of Men". Put briefly, Byron is partly identified with the narrators and these narrators again partly with the protagonists. (3) Lastly, Byron's poems make frequent references to circumstances that readers knew (from newspaper articles, gossip, etc.) to be similar to those in which Byron lived at the time of writing (e.g. composing *Manfred* in Switzerland and *Beppo* in Venice).

However, neither, the 'auto-intertextuality' of Byron's poems, nor their partial identification of narrator and protagonist as well as of narrator and author, nor their implicit autobiographical contextualisation can sufficiently explain why so many readers were (and are) adamant that Byron's poems contain the author's heart and soul. The similarity of his Byronic heroes to one another might, for instance, be just a result of Byron's (and his publisher's) realisation that works featuring such characters sold extremely well. The sentiments in his lyrical poems may simply be entirely fictional and derivative of other popular lyrics at the time; their reappearance in the narrative poems does not necessarily make the latter in any way confessional. Moreover, as readers would have known from, for instance, Scott's poems, one may write about a culture and landscape that is very familiar to oneself without in the least resembling any of one's characters.

This is where the central importance of Byron's personal annotations shows itself. Without them (and their hints that the poems are partly based on Byron's personal experience), readers would have been much less inclined

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to identify him with his narrators and protagonists. But, in turn, without his 'indecorous' facetious notes, readers would also have been less eager to call this very identification into question. In other words, Byron's 'personal' notes serve an important double function: they create the illusion of sincere, complete self-expression and factual, autobiographical self-revelation, and they cast severe doubt on it again.

3.2.1.1 Byron, Harold, and the Narrator of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II: Identification and Dissociation Through Annotation

In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II, the published and the unpublished 'personal' annotations serve quite different functions. The published ones mainly disambiguate the work and suggest that it is indeed autobiographically factual and 'sincere'. A handful of published notes, however, cast some slight doubts on this, thereby ambiguating the self-revelatory nature of *CHP* again. In a few unpublished notes, however, these doubts grow: while they still affirm the work's autobiographical *factuality*, these annotations strongly insinuate that the narrator's and the protagonist's *feelings and opinions* are by no means identical with Byron's.

The Published Annotations: Digressive Identification

Among all of Byron's works, it is especially in *CHP* that he uses anecdotal annotations to ground the poem in his personal experience, going so far as to give the exact date and circumstances during which certain passages were composed. For example, he informs readers that one stanza was written at Castri "at the foot of Parnassus" and yet another passage at Thebes (*CHP* 1.60n; 1.70n; *CPW* 2: 280; 2: 189). In a further instance, he also tells them that

> [t]his is written in the eye of Mont Blanc, (June 3d. 1816) which even at this distance dazzles mine. (June 20th). This day I observed for some time the distant reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentiere in the calm of the lake, which I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is 60 miles. (*CHP* 3.67n; *CPW* 2: 308)

In another case, anticipating objections that "[t]he above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or Italian sky", Byron assures his audience that this is, in fact, a "literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth) as contemplated during a ride along the Banks of the Brenta – near La Mira" (*CHP* 4.27n; *CPW* 2: 228). Elsewhere, he informs readers that "[t]he thunder-storms to which these lines refer occurred on the 13th of June, 1816, at midnight. I have seen among

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the Acroceraunian mountains of Chimari several more terrible, but none more beautiful" (*CHP* 3.92n; *CPW* 2: 311).[50]

None of the passages annotated in this manner *require* annotation; they do not raise any questions that have to be addressed in a note, and one dare say that readers did not need to learn the specific dates on which Byron saw sunsets and thunderstorms to believe that he was capable of accurately describing such natural phenomena. If these notes were xenographic rather than authorial, the editor would probably be seen as over-zealous, pedantic, or simply incapable of distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information. As they stand, however, they *are* relevant, though not with respect to their informational content.

Byron's anecdotal annotations often appear less like explanatory notes than entries in a personal diary at which readers are allowed to take a brief peek.[51]

50 *Beppo* and *Don Juan* likewise feature notes that provide information on the circumstances of composition, attest to the verisimilitude of the poems, and partly identify Byron with the narrator. In *Beppo*, the annotated passage reads: "They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place / To which I mean to go myself to-morrow[)]" (*Beppo* 64). This is annotated "January 19th 1818. Tomorrow will be Sunday Sull' Ridotto" (*Beppo* 64n; *CPW* 4: 489; as McGann notes in *CPW*, Byron gets the date wrong). The annotated passage does not raise any questions that might require an annotation (the question what a "Ridotto" even is has been answered in stanza 58). Thus, in a note that would seem quite irrelevant if it were a xenographic rather than an autographic one, Byron suggests that the first-person narrator can here be equated with himself and informs readers about his current leisure activities. In *Don Juan*, the autobiographical annotation is appended to the famous stanza on the assassination of the military commandant of Ravenna: "The other evening ('twas on Friday last) – / This is a fact and no poetic fable –", etc. (*Don Juan* 5.33). The note reads: "The assassination alluded to took place on the eighth of December, 1820, in the streets of Ravenna, not a hundred paces from the residence of the writer. The circumstances were as described" (*Don Juan* 5.33n; *CPW* 5: 707). Here, the note affirms what the poem asserts; the present stanza describes a "fact and no poetic fable". This affirmation is needed because other – clearly fictional – passages in the poem are likewise claimed to be entirely factual by the narrator. For instance, the secret rendezvous between Juan and Julia is dated precisely to "the sixth of June, about the hour / Of half-past six – perhaps still nearer seven" (*Don Juan* 1.104), and the narrator later asserts that his "story's actually true" and that he himself "and several now in Seville, / *Saw* Juan's last elopement with the devil" (*Don Juan* 1.202–03, original emphasis). Due to such unconvincing protestations of factuality in the poem itself, one requires a note to clarify when a fact is indeed a fact.

51 The diary-like manner of Byron's annotations for *CHP* is perhaps most apparent in an unpublished note to the second canto: "An additional 'misery to human life!' – lying-to at sunset for a large convoy till the sternmost pass ahead. Mem.: fine frigate, fair wind likely to change before morning, but enough at present for ten knots!" (*CHP* 2.20n; *CPW* 2: 286). Some of the annotations in *CHP* I–II also recycle passages from Byron's letters to his mother and his friends in England.

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By informing readers that even descriptions of such mundane events as sunsets refer to specific occurrences, Byron makes the biographical context seem relevant for an understanding of the poem. These notes suggest that the poem could never have been written if the author had not witnessed a specific event or visited a specific place – it is entirely fuelled by experience, not imagination, and one cannot fully make sense of the work without knowing the author's life.

These anecdotal annotations in *CHP* are usually appended to passages in which the narrator rather than the protagonist is speaking. Thus, – unlike the preface to *CHP* I–II, which is mainly concerned with the (non-)identity of Byron and Harold – these notes primarily serve to connect author and narrator.[52] Nevertheless, they can be seen as linking Byron and Harold at least by proxy, since Harold and the narrator are frequently indistinguishable (cf. Pointner and Weißenfels 73–74): the passages that are supposed to be spoken by the narrator and those that are supposed to be spoken by the Childe cannot always be clearly separated from one another, and the transitions between them are often nearly imperceptible (cf. Calderaro 40).[53] Thus, in *CHP*'s constant game of both denying and affirming the identity of Byron, his narrator, and his protagonist, the prefaces serve to ambiguate this identification, while the published annotations mainly disambiguate it and emphasise the autobiographical nature of the work.

The socio-pragmatic and the intratextual functions of the annotations are nearly identical in these cases: they attest to the verisimilitude of Byron's descriptions and serve to suggest that both Harold's and the narrator's experiences are actually Byron's. From this, it is only a small step for readers to assume that Harold's and the narrator's opinions and feelings are likewise Byron's. There is little evidence in the published version of *CHP* that would contradict such a notion, and there is even at least one annotation that directly supports it. This note is appended to the stanzas commemorating Byron's Harrow favourite John Wingfield, which are supposedly spoken by the narrator (beginning "And thou, my friend! – since unavailing woe / Bursts from my heart, and mingles with the strain"; *CHP* 1.91). The note explains that these lines refer to a real person and that the narrator's grief is, in fact, Byron's: "In the short space of one month I have lost *her* who gave me being, and most of those who had

52 For Byron's stronger connection with the narrators of *CHP* and *Don Juan* than with their protagonists, also see Graham, "His Grand Show" 29.

53 For instance, passages that first appear as if they were spoken by the narrator later turn out to be spoken by Harold, e.g. the long attack against the Convention of Cintra (*CHP* 1.24–26) ends with the statement "[s]o deem'd the Childe" (*CHP* 1.27).

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made that being tolerable" (*CHP* 1.91n, original emphasis; *CPW* 2: 189).[54] In the published version of *CHP*, the annotations can therefore be seen as one of the main reasons why readers were so eager to read the work as the author's direct, sincere self-revelation and to picture Byron as a disillusioned, melancholy man like his narrator and protagonist.

Yet, even in the published version of *CHP*, there are a few elements that cast some doubt on this image of Byron. Just as there are still a few hints of humour and satire in the published poem, some of the published annotations likewise introduce a dose of facetiousness. There, we find comments like "[t]he fountain of Dirce turns a mill: at least, my companion (who resolving to be at once cleanly and classical bathed in it) pronounced it to be the fountain" (*CHP* 2.73n, Paper I; *CPW* 199), remarks such as "[a]ccording to Pouqueville

54 This annotation may be seen as yet another example of a note that differentiates between readerships (for such annotations, see chapter 3.2.2): in all authorised editions published during Byron's lifetime, the annotation does not spell out the name of the person who is alluded to in the stanza. Thus, the reference would only have been clear to Wingfield's family and friends. Rather than straightforwardly commemorating (and naming) Wingfield, the annotation goes on to provide an obituary on Byron's mother and his friend Charles Skinner Matthews, who are not mentioned in the stanza at all. Furthermore, the annotation embeds the expression of Byron's own grief in the tradition of pre-Romantic poetry. This is not only achieved through the quote from Young's *Night Thoughts* in the note but also through a subtler allusion (not annotated by Byron) in the poem itself. As McGann points out, the line "And thou, my friend! – since unavailing woe" refers to an expression used at the very end of James Beattie's *The Minstrel* (cf. editor's n for *CHP* 1.927; *CPW* 2: 282). The passage in Beattie reads "Art thou, my G********, for ever fled! / And am I left to unavailing woe!" (Beattie 2.63). Here, as in Byron's note on Wingfield, one can see the curious case of a poet commemorating a friend without naming him. Even more intriguingly, Beattie also appended an annotation to the passage. In this note on the line "Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!", Beattie explains that "[t]his excellent Person died suddenly, on the 10th of February, 1773. The conclusion of the poem was written a few days after" (Beattie 2.62n). The similarities between Byron's and Beattie's literary monuments to their dead friends are apparent: both added the mournful stanzas after having already finished the rest of the poem, both supply a commemorative note, and both do not name the friend but provide certain hints that make him at least partly identifiable. Hence, the stanza and note on Wingfield, Lady Byron, and Matthews, can – just like the preface to the first two cantos of *CHP* – be seen as one of Byron's attempts to align his poem with the tradition of Beattie.

For other cases in which Byron used his annotations to commemorate friends, see his long obituary on Madame de Staël in a note for *CHP* 4.54 (*CPW* 2: 235–36) and the annotation on his Cambridge acquaintance Edward Grose, who died at Waterloo and whose name was later misspelled in the Duke of Wellington's Despatch in the official *London Gazette* (22 June 1815, iss. 17028). The note on him is appended to *Don Juan* 8.18 (*CPW* 5: 732), a passage that attacks public military commemorations that de-personalise and de-individualise the fallen soldiers. For a discussion of the note on de Staël, see Gardiner, *passim*. For the annotation about Grose, see J. R. Watson 163–64.

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the lake of Yanina; but Pouqueville is always out" (*CHP* 2.47n; *CPW* 2: 288), and long notes that ridicule scholarly controversies.[55] Reviewers noted the fact that some stanzas and notes presented a jarring contrast to the solemn tone of the rest of the work. As Jane Stabler points out, the *Eclectic Review* (vol. 8, June 1812), for instance, objected to the few humorous and satirical stanzas in the poem (e.g. *CHP* 1.25–26; 1.69–70) and criticised Byron's irreverent comment on Sydney Owenson's *Ida of Athens* in one of his notes (cf. Stabler, *Byron, Poetics and History* 23; "Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, I–II" 638–39). And the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 19, no. 38, Feb. 1812) commented: "The Notes are written in a flippant, lively, *tranchant* and assuming style – neither very deep nor very witty; though rather entertaining" ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*" 475, original emphasis). The reviewer's bewilderment at the fact that "the author of the [serious, lofty] passages we have quoted could write such [facetious] stanzas as the following" shows how strongly readings of *CHP* were guided by questions of tonal consistency and the belief that the author must himself feel the sentiments that are expressed in the work ("Review of

55 For instance, in his summary of a dispute between Pouqueville and a Mr. Thornton, Byron facetiously remarks: "'Aha['], thinks Mr. Thornton (angry with the Doctor for the fiftieth time) 'have I caught you?' – Then, in a note twice the thickness of the Doctor's anecdote, he questions the Doctor's proficiency in the Turkish tongue, and his veracity in his own" (*CHP* 2.73n, Paper II n; *CPW* 2: 292). Slightly later, Byron makes fun of a French Hellenist who threatened to throw one of his colleagues out of the window (cf. *CHP* 2.73n, Paper III n; *CPW* 2: 293).

The annotations also give Byron the chance to exact his revenge on the *Edinburgh Review*, which, in its article on *Hours of Idleness*, had questioned his knowledge of the Scottish dialect. He writes: "There is a slip of the pen, and it can only be a slip of the pen, in p. 58. No. 31. of the *Edinburgh Review*, where these words occur: – 'We are told that when the capital of the East yielded to *Solyman*' – It may be presumed that this last word will, in a future edition, be altered to Mahomet II. […] Query, – Was it in Scotland that the young gentlemen of the Edinburgh Review *learned* that *Solyman* means *Mahomet II*. any more than *criticism* means *infallibility*? […] The mistake seemed so completely a lapse of the pen (from the great similarity of the two words, and the total absence of error from the former pages of the literary leviathan) that I should have passed it over as in the text, had I not perceived in the Edinburgh Review much facetious exultation on all such detections" (*CHP* 2.73n, Paper III n; *CWP* 2: 206; 2: 294, original emphasis). The joke that the *Edinburgh Review* must have confounded Solyman and Mahomet due to "the great similarity of the two words" might be a reference to an annotation in *Tristram Shandy* (vol. 2, ch. 19). In the note, the fictional editor surmises that Tristram mistook "*Lithopædus* for *Trinecavellius*, – from the too great similitude of the names" (Sterne 121, original emphasis). Byron's use of the annotations to react to his enemies also, of course, reminds of Pope.

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Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, I–II" 638).[56] The reviewers were, however, not as shocked at the tonal differences between the poem and some of the notes as they would be one year later in the case of *The Giaour* (see below). The reason for this was perhaps that – in the published version – the most humorous comments occur only in the notes on the notes (on the notes), i.e. either in the papers to which the annotation on *CHP* 2.73 refers or in the annotations on these papers. Two or even three times removed from the poem, they have hardly any relation to the narrative and, thus, are not particularly suited to raise any serious doubts as to whether the narrator's and protagonist's feelings are really Byron's and whether the poem can be interpreted as the confession of a deeply melancholic man.

The Unpublished Annotations: Facetious Dissociation

In the manuscript version of *CHP*, things lie differently. Even in the poem itself, the mix of the serious and the comic, of pathos and bathos, was much more prominent than in the published version, though loftiness and melancholy still by far outweighed the humorous aspects (cf. Joseph 21; McGann, *Fiery Dust* 105; Stabler, *Byron, Poetics and History* 20–21).[57] A considerable degree of facetiousness can also be found in some of the annotations that Byron ultimately decided to omit. One of them is appended to a passage in which the narrator ponders on the prevalence of blood vengeance in Spain:

> Nurtur'd in blood betimes, his heart delights
> In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
> What private feuds the troubled village stain!
> Though now one phalanx'd host should meet the foe,
> Enough, alas! in humble homes remain,
> To meditate 'gainst friends the secret blow,
> For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm stream must flow. (*CHP* 1.80)

The annotation, though attesting to the veracity of this observation, makes light of the issue: "The Spaniards are as revengeful as ever. At Santa Olalla I

56 The objections voiced by the *Critical Review* (vol. 1, no. 6, June 1812) are very similar: "The occasional bursts of humour are [...] unpleasant, as breaking in too abruptly upon the general tone of the reader's feelings" ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* I–II" 571–72).

57 Some of the comic, satiric, homoerotic, and religiously sceptical stanzas and notes were omitted at the request of Robert Charles Dallas and John Murray (cf. Joseph 21; Murray 3). The much more serious and melancholic tone of the published version of *CHP* I–II was, of course, also a reaction to the recent deaths of Byron's mother, John Wingfield, John Edleston, and Charles Skinner Matthews, of which Byron had learnt after his return to England.

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heard a young peasant threaten to stab a woman (an old one to be sure, which mitigates the offence), and was told on expressing some small surprise, that this ethic was by no means uncommon" (*CHP* 1.80n; *CPW* 2: 280). Like the anecdotal annotations discussed above, this one grounds the poem in Byron's own experience. However, it also suggests that, in the course of transforming life into literature, Byron rendered certain occurrences much loftier and more serious than they actually were. This not only raises questions about the similarities between Byron and his narrator (and Harold), it also suggests that other passages – though based on Byron's life – might likewise have undergone this process of poetic elevation and by no means reflect the triviality of the original event, nor Byron's feelings towards it.[58] And again, the autobiographical factuality of the poem is partly affirmed, while the sincerity of the feelings and opinions expressed in the poem is ambiguated.

The relationship between Byron (as he presents himself in the note) and the narrator of the passage can be interpreted in various ways, with different implications for the (in)sincerity of the feelings that are being expressed in the poem. The annotation can be read as (1) Byron making fun of the sombre, pompous narrator who can by no means be identified with himself, (2) Byron ridiculing the pose he himself adopts in the poem, or (3) Byron being ambivalent about the subject of the passage, using the poem to stress its tragic aspects and the annotation to stress its comedy. In any case, the note points readers to the difference between the real author and the persona that is speaking in the poem and makes one wonder how much of the melancholy in the poem is simply a fashionable pose rather than authentic self-revelation. In cases (1) and (2), the tonal inconsistencies raise serious doubts about Byron's sincerity in the poem (or in the note, though this less likely given its closer association with the

58 There are at least two other instances of such bathetic notes in *CHP*. The first (though not an autobiographically anecdotal one) is appended to the following passage "Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay, / Where dwelt of yore the Lusian's luckless queen; / And church and court did mingle their array, / And mass and revel were alternate seen" (*CHP* 1.29). These lines refer to Queen Maria I of Portugal (1734–1816) (for her illness and treatment, see Peters and Willis 293). On this lofty, half-archaic, and sympathetic passage, the unpublished annotation irreverently comments: "Her insane majesty went religiously mad. Dr. Willis, who so dexterously cudgelled kingly pericraniums, could make not a thing of hers", a satirical reference to George III, who was likewise treated by Willis (*CHP* 1.29n; *CPW* 2: 277). The other example occurs in the fourth canto (1818, six years after *CHP* I–II), where Byron apostrophises and mythologises the river Clitumnus: "But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave / Of the most living crystal that was e'er / The haunt of river nymph" (*CHP* 4.66). There, the beginning of the annotation reads: "In my gratitude to the Clitumnus I ought not to forget the largest and very best trout that ever were seen in a river or a dish" (*CHP* 4.66n; *CPW* 2: 328).

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actual author). In the third case, however, the very contradictoriness of poem and note might just as well be the ultimate form of authentic albeit ambivalent self-expression, a way of coming to terms with the fact that in Byron's case "the same skin, / For one without, has two or three within" (*Don Juan* 17.11).

No matter how one interprets the interplay of poem and note in this instance, one may surmise that, if this and other facetious annotations had not been omitted from the published versions of *CHP*, readers and reviewers would probably have been a bit more hesitant to read the narrator's and Harold's disenchantment and sadness as Byron's entirely sincere and complete self-revelation. As it was, the melancholic, misanthropic, sceptical, and immoral character traits ascribed to the narrator and Harold came to dominate Byron's public image from *CHP* onwards until the publication of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* – notwithstanding earlier satirical productions like *EBSR* and *The Waltz* and despite the fact that a handful of published notes in his other works (especially in *The Giaour*) humorously subverted this image.

3.2.1.2 Cheerful Editor vs. Suffering Hero in *The Giaour*

The annotations in *The Giaour* are among the most-discussed paratexts of Byron's œuvre, and they are so for a good reason. Published one year after *CHP* I–II, this work takes the tonal inconsistency between poem and notes that was only sparsely found in *CHP* to new extremes. The stark contrast between the tone of the poem and that of some (but by no means all) of its annotations has puzzled readers, critics, and scholars ever since the publication of *The Giaour*. The *Scots Magazine* (Oct. 1813), for instance, complained:

> We do not think there is anything positively bad in this volume, except the notes. These Lord Byron seems to have studied to write in a manner the most opposite possible to that in which he has composed the poem. They aim at that flippant wit, and careless indifference, which forms the reigning tone among the most frivolous of the most fashionable circle. We object to this style […] chiefly, because these notes, occurring very frequently, interrupt completely that tone of deep solemnity which reigns unbroken through the poetry. ("Review of *The Giaour*" 772)[59]

59 The comment of the *British Review* (vol. 5, no. 9, Oct. 1813) is in a similar vein: "The notes which his lordship has added by way of explanation of these words, and also of particular facts and customs to which the poem alludes, are beyond measure trifling and injudicious. Some of them tell us what every body knew before. Some of them come in aid of the odd words used in the text, and ought not to have been rendered necessary; and some of them call our attention from the midst of tumult and slaughter to some ridiculous story, or fable of superstition. We will not say that the inimitable satyrist [sic] of the Scotish [sic] bards and reviewers is without the talent of humour; but we must say that the attempts at humour in these notes are very far below the standard of his lordship's undoubted taste

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Contemporary reviewers (foreshadowing the outrage over the tonal discrepancies of *Don Juan* six years later) thus perceived the facetiousness of the annotations as being altogether inappropriate for a poem as serious as *The Giaour*. The indecorous mismatch between the style of the poem and that of some of the notes has led Tom Mole to argue that Byron

> splits himself between text and footnote in *The Giaour*, providing a number of approaches to an imagined pre-textual Byron, some of which appear to be contradictory. […] [He] writes against a reductive Byronism which would portray him only as a Romantic hero[.] […] The text and the footnote provide two versions of Byron, which do not exist in harmony, but which are nonetheless both recognisably him. (Mole, "Narrative Desire and the Body in *The Giaour*" 92–93)

While Mole argues that both the gloomy poem and the comical notes may provide a glimpse at the 'real' Byron, he acknowledges that some readers might feel the need to choose between what they see as the cheerful and the melancholic version of the author: the tonal contrast between poem and note results in a "nonchalant comedy [which] gives the reader room to wonder where the real Byron is. Does he endorse the high rhetorical enthusiasm of the poem, or the irony of the note?" (Mole, "Narrative Desire and the Body in *The Giaour*" 93). In a similar vein, Ourania Chatsiou notes that, in the annotations for *The Giaour*, Byron rebels against the "conventional authorial identity of the poet of the romantic sublime" and creates an "alternative identity of the ironic, factual antiquarian", making readers wonder "which of the two identities is the real one" (Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics* 113–14 n148). Elsewhere, she tentatively answers this question, surmising that the notes "puncture sentiment and the illusion of fiction, upsetting the reader's bond with the main poetic text", which would suggest that the 'real', facetious Byron is trying to destroy the gloomy image of himself that the poem builds up (Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 647). This view is also implicit in Barbara Ravelhofer's and Alice Levine's essays on *The Giaour*, though neither of them directly discusses the question where (if anywhere) the 'real' Byron is to be found in the work. Ravelhofer contends that the notes "undermine the apparent seriousness of the main text" and work "as an anti-dote on doting readers who are […] carried away by the immediacy of seemingly straight oral poetry" (Ravelhofer 27; 28). Levine likewise argues

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and spirit. The note upon the phenomenon of the captain pasha's whiskers is a specimen of this ill-placed drollery. Indeed the curling of the angry Mussulman's beard when beset with foes which threaten him with instant death, was a circumstance very ill suited to the horror of the scene which it was the poet's purpose and duty to describe with that dignity which the most obvious of poetical proprieties demanded" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 141).

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that "[t]he notes in *The Giaour* [...] pull the reader away from the story and the poetry, and, in both their content and style, work overtime to dispel the atmosphere and emotion built up in the poem" (A. Levine 131). According to these views the cheerful, waggish 'real' Byron of the notes makes fun of his own poem which itself is far from providing any glimpse at his actual feelings, opinions, and memories. However, in what follows, I would like to suggest that there are five factors that render the search for the 'real' Byron in *The Giaour* much more complicated than critics have so far allowed. These factors are:

I. The ambiguous autobiographical factuality of *The Giaour*. There are notes that suggest that the poem is based on Byron's experiences in the Ottoman Empire as well as notes that call this into question and explain that *The Giaour* is based on an event that had nothing to do with Byron whatsoever.

II. The ambiguous 'sincerity' of *The Giaour* mentioned by Mole, Chatsiou, Ravelhofer, and Levine. This ambiguity arises from the facetious annotations which raise the question whether Byron is distancing himself from the solemnity of his poem, thereby insinuating that the feelings and opinions expressed in the verses should by no means be taken for his own.

III. The fact that *The Giaour* is an editorial fiction which alleges that the main body of the poem is a story told in a Levantine coffee-house, which was 'overheard', 'translated' and 'annotated' by a European traveller. This traveller purportedly also added a few passages to the poem himself. This editorial fiction distances Byron from large sections of the poem and partly identifies him with the European traveller. However, while the last note on the poem claims that *The Giaour* in its entirety (poem and notes) is the work of two different persons, readers knew, of course, that Byron wrote both the whole poem and the notes. This results in the co-existence of two communicative situations: on the inner level of communication, the traveller is annotating the coffee-house storyteller (and sometimes himself), whereas on the outer level of communication Byron is annotating his own poem. What adds to the complexity is the variety of narrators and speaking characters in the poem itself, i.e. it is not only the Levantine storyteller (or, on the outer level, Byron) who are being targeted by irreverent notes but also the narrators and characters in their tale.

IV. Byron's use of Romantic irony as well as his introduction of the concept of "mobility" in *Don Juan* in 1824 (*Don Juan* 16.96–98 and n) and the different possible interpretations of *The Giaour* that retrospectively arise from these two notions.

V. The posthumous revelation that the main incident of *The Giaour* was indeed closely modelled on Byron's own life.

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All of these factors taken together show that in *The Giaour* Byron plays an extremely complex game of hide-and-seek with his readers, constantly appearing to offer glimpses into his present character as well as his past experiences while frequently raising doubts about the accuracy and sincerity of these glimpses.

I. The Ambiguous Autobiographical Factuality of The Giaour

As in the case of *CHP*, one has to ask why exactly readers and reviewers pondered the question whether *The Giaour* provides an insight into Byron's life and feelings in the first place. In effect, without the annotations, *The Giaour* could very well be seen as an entirely fictional work. In the poem itself, the only hint at its potentially autobiographical nature is the fact that the protagonist's feelings bear some resemblance to those of both the narrator and protagonist of *CHP*, who, as we have seen, had been partly aligned with Byron himself one year earlier. The annotations for *The Giaour* underpin this notion by – to some extent – creating the impression that the poem is based on Byron's experiences in the Ottoman Empire. In these notes, we find subjective comments that suggest that they are drawn from first-hand experience rather than book-learning. When describing javelin throwers, for instance, Byron explains that "the most expert in the art are the Black Eunuchs of Constantinople. – I think, next to these, a Mamlouk at Smyrna was the most skilful that came within my own observation" (*Giaour* 251n; *CPW* 3: 417). Later, he reflects that, "on a still evening, when the Muezzin has a fine voice (which they frequently have) the effect is solemn and beautiful beyond all the bells in Christendom" (*Giaour* 734n; *CPW* 3: 420). Comments such as these, though neither directly aligning Byron with his protagonist, nor insinuating that the plot of the poem is based on his own life, nevertheless suggest that Byron has a closer personal connection with his subject matter than, for example, Robert Southey and Thomas Moore, who wrote about the East without ever having been there.

Then, however, the last annotation on the poem casts some doubt on Byron's familiarity with the Orient. In a passage which was only added to this note in the second edition, Byron admits that, rather than being drawn from his personal knowledge of Eastern cultures, some of his explanatory notes are based on Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* and Samuel Henley's annotations in Beckford's *Vathek* (cf. *Giaour* 1334n; *CPW* 2: 423). The impression of first-hand knowledge that Byron's unsourced annotations suggest is, accordingly, not always justified. It is unclear whether Byron's failure to cite his sources properly in every annotation (as other Romantic poets usually did) was the result of laziness or of the desire to overstate his personal familiarity with Eastern

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mores in order to convince readers that there is an autobiographical background to the poem.

In addition, the last note on the poem raises even more questions about the potentially autobiographical nature of the poem. Unlike the annotation that Byron initially planned on appending to the poem, which connected Leila's drowning with an incident that he witnessed and prevented himself (see below), this one connects the main event in the poem to history and literature, not to Byron's own life:

> The circumstance to which the above story relates was not very uncommon in Turkey. A few years ago the wife of Muchtar Pacha complained to his father of his son's supposed infidelity; he asked with whom, and she had the barbarity to give in a list of the twelve handsomest women in Yanina. They were seized, fastened up in sacks, and drowned in the lake the same night! [...] The fate of Phrosine [Kyra Frosini], the fairest of this sacrifice, is the subject of many a Romaic and Arnaut ditty. (*Giaour* 1334n; *CPW* 2: 422–23)

This note seems to suggest that the poem is based recent history (the murders only happened a little bit over a decade before the publication of *The Giaour*) and on songs inspired by this event, with no more than a few minor details drawn from Byron's own experiences.

This impression, however, is again undermined elsewhere in *The Giaour*. Here, the annotation directly links an event in the poem to an event in the author's life. In the annotated passage (which is part of the Giaour's dying confession), the protagonist tells the prior that Hassan knew he would soon be killed:

> His [Hassan's] doom was seal'd – he knew it well,
> Warn'd by the voice of stern Taheer,
> Deep in whose darkly boding ear
> The deathshot peal'd of murder near – (*Giaour* 1075–78)

These lines are followed by an exceptionally long annotation:

> This superstition of a second-hearing (for I never met with downright second-sight in the East) fell once under my own observation. – On my third journey to Cape Colonna early in 1811, as we passed through the defile that leads from the hamlet between Keratia and Colonna, I observed Dervish Tahiri riding rather out of the path, and leaning his head upon his hand, as if in pain.– I rode up and enquired. 'We are in peril,' he answered. 'What peril? we are not now in Albania, nor in the passes to Ephesus, Messalunghi, or Lepanto; there are plenty of us, well armed, and the Choriates [peasants] have not courage to be thieves' – 'True, Affendi, but nevertheless the shot is ringing in my ears.' – 'The shot! – not

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> a tophaike has been fired this morning.' – 'I hear it notwithstanding – Bom – Bom – as plainly as I hear your voice.'– 'Psha.'– 'As you please, Affendi; if it is written, so will it be.' – I left this quickeared predestinarian, and rode up to Basili, his Christian compatriot; whose ears, though not at all prophetic, by no means relished the intelligence. – We all arrived at Colonna, remained some hours, and returned leisurely, saying a variety of brilliant things, in more languages than spoiled the building of Babel, upon the mistaken seer. Romaic [modern Greek], Arnaout [Albanian], Turkish, Italian, and English were all exercised, in various conceits, upon the unfortunate Mussulman. While we were contemplating the beautiful prospect, Dervish was occupied about the columns. – I thought he was deranged into an antiquarian, and asked him if he had become a '*Palaocastro*' man: 'No.' said he, 'but these pillars will be useful in making a stand'; and added other remarks, which at least evinced his own belief in his troublesome faculty of *forehearing*. – On our return to Athens, we heard from Leone (a prisoner set ashore some days after) of the intended attack of the Mainotes, mentioned, with the cause of its not taking place, in the notes to *Childe Harolde* [sic], Canto 2d. – I was at some pains to question the man, and he described the dresses, arms, and marks of the horses of our party so accurately, that with other circumstances, we could not doubt of *his* having been in 'villainous company', and ourselves in a bad neighbourhood. – Dervish became a sooth-sayer for life, and I dare say is now hearing more musquetry than ever will be fired, to the great refreshment of the Arnaouts of Berat, and his native mountains. – I shall mention one trait more of this singular race. – In March 1811, a remarkably stout and active Arnaout came (I believe the 50th on the same errand) to offer himself as an attendant, which was declined: 'Well, Affendi,' quoth he, 'may you live! – you would have found me useful. I shall leave the town for the hills to-morrow; in the winter I return, perhaps you will then receive me.' – Dervish, who was present, remarked as a thing of course, and of no consequence, 'in the mean time he will join the Klephtes' (robbers), which was true to the letter. – If not cut off, they come down in the winter, and pass it unmolested in some town, where they are often as well known as their exploits. (*Giaour* 1077n; *CPW* 3: 421–22, original emphasis)[60]

At least partly, this annotation stresses the autobiographical background of the poem and attests to its verisimilitude. It suggests that the passage is inspired by Byron's own witnessing of an instance of "second-hearing". Allegedly, Byron's Albanian companion Tahiri not only believed in fore-hearing, his prediction also turned out to be correct. If readers choose to take this as a proof that second-hearing really exists, the note heightens the seriousness of the

60 The annotation in *CHP* II which this note refers to reads as follows: "In our second land excursion, we had a narrow escape from a party of Mainnotes, concealed in the caverns beneath. We were told afterwards, by one of their prisoners subsequently ransomed, that they were deterred from attacking us by the appearance of my two Albanians: conjecturing very sagaciously, but falsely, that we had a complete guard of these Arnaouts at hand, they remained stationary, and thus saved our party, which was too small to have opposed any effectual resistance" (*CHP* 2.12n; *CPW* 2: 284–85).

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annotated passage and suggests that the Giaour is not naive or superstitious, nor that readers should make light of his tormented memories. (For the note's ridicule of second-hearing and the question what this means for the search for the 'real' Byron, see below.) The very ending of the note, which is altogether unrelated to the annotated passage and the concept of second-hearing, yet again refers to Byron's experiences in Albania and clarifies that the Giaour's decision to join a band of robbers to avenge himself on Hassan is not as melodramatic or unrealistic as readers might assume. Byron's anecdote suggests that, in fact, becoming a robber is neither an uncommon nor a disreputable choice in the region in which the poem is set.[61]

By explaining that even such a minute detail as the name of Taheer, the "predestinarian" in *The Giaour*, was inspired by Byron's Albanian friend Tahiri, the note creates the impression that nothing about the poem is entirely fictional. This, of course, creates demand for more weighty revelations. If Taheer is based on a real person in Byron's life, what about Leila? Or even the Giaour himself? The annotations refuse to answer such questions, and this lack of disclosure is all the more felt when contrasted with the abundance of information on rather trivial issues that they provide.

The impression that – despite their often considerable length – Byron's paratexts hide more than they divulge is also reinforced by *half*-revelatory notes which tantalisingly hint at grave or shocking autobiographical backgrounds without elaborating on them. In *The Giaour*, one such case occurs in

61 The annotation also serves a further, purely intratextual function, which, however, is not related to the focus of this chapter. It implicitly characterises the Giaour by making clear that – while English readers would be more familiar with fore-sight – the belief in fore-hearing is decidedly Eastern or even exclusively Albanian. (John Galt, in his 1813 *Letters from the Levant*, confirms that the "Albanians have among them persons who pretend to know the character of approaching events, by hearing sounds which resemble those that will accompany, the actual occurrence" (Galt 178). Galt associates second-sight with the Scottish Highlanders and second-hearing with the Albanians (cf. ibid.)). The annotation thus highlights that the Giaour holds views that are not at all associated with his place of origin (Venice) but with the culture that he adopted (or pretended to adopt) while living in the Levant. Hence, the Giaour's reference to second-hearing is one of many instances in the poem that call into question the status as a representative of the West that Hassan and the fisherman ascribe to him. Other examples include the passages in which he agrees with his mortal enemy Hassan that an unfaithful woman deserves death ("Yet did he but what I had done / Had she been false to more than one"; 1062–63) and in which he asserts that love is "by Alla given" (1133). Alice Levine likewise argues that "[t]he notes underscore how, at every level, *The Giaour* refuses the Christian/Muslim dichotomy that seems central to its subject matter" (A. Levine 132). For a recent discussion of all the elements in *The Giaour* that make the protagonist's culture and religion so 'unclassifiable', see Bode, "Byron's Dis-orientations".

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an annotation on the facial expressions of corpses: Byron introduces his note by stating that he believes that "few of my readers have ever had an opportunity of witnessing what is here attempted in description", before proceeding to muse on the "singular beauty which pervades […] the features of the dead, a few hours […] after 'the spirit is not there'" (*Giaour* 89n; *CPW* 3: 416). He then continues to explain that people who have been shot dead usually retain a different facial expression than those who have been stabbed. While strongly implying that Byron has seen several corpses of people who had suffered violent deaths, the annotation does not provide any information on the *when, where*, and *who*.[62] Notes like these suggest that there are subtle hints of Byron's (allegedly) fascinating or shocking past inscribed in the poem but that they can never be fully spelled out. The annotated passage in this case is not at all concerned with violence and murder but with the fallen beauty of contemporary Greece. By appending such a note to it, Byron insinuates that even inconspicuous lines may contain traces of half-supressed, tormenting memories. The anecdotal but unsatisfying annotations, then, dare readers to reconstruct the missing background themselves and to scrutinise other passages for similar hidden meanings. Even Goethe was not exempt from this temptation. In his 1817 review of *Manfred* (first published in 1820), he contends that Byron has

> often enough confessed what it is that torments him. He has repeatedly pourtrayed it; and scarcely any one feels compassion for this intolerable suffering, over which he is ever laboriously ruminating. […] When a bold and enterprising young man, he won the affections of a Florentine lady. Her husband discovered the amour, and murdered his wife; but the murderer was the same night found dead in the street, and there was no one on whom any suspicion could be attached. Lord Byron removed from Florence, and these spirits haunted him all his life after. This romantic incident is rendered highly probably by innumerable allusions to it in his poems. (Goethe in Rutherford, *Critical Heritage* 119–20)[63]

62 In his note on this passage in *The Giaour*, Peter Cochran dryly remarks that "[i]t is not clear that B. had, in 1813, ever seen bodies of people who had been either shot or stabbed" (Cochran, ed., *The Giaour* 6n6).

63 The original (published in *Kunst und Altertum* vol. 2, no. 2) reads: "Er hat oft genug bekannt was ihn quält, er hat es wiederholt dargestellt, und kaum hat irgend Jemand Mitleid mit seinem unerträglichen Schmerz, mit dem er sich, wiederkäuend, immer herumarbeitet. […] Als ein junger, kühner, höchstanziehender Mann gewinnt er die Neigung einer florentinischen Dame, der Gemal [sic] entdeckt es und ermordet seine Frau. Aber auch der Mörder wird in derselben Nacht auf der Straße todt gefunden, ohne daß jedoch der Verdacht auf irgend Jemand könnte geworfen werden. Lord Byron entfernt sich von Florenz und schleppt solche Gespenster sein ganzes Leben hinter sich drein. Dieses mährchenhafte [sic] Ereigniß wird durch unzählige Anspielungen in seinen Gedichten vollkommen wahrscheinlich" (Goethe 455).

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In his conversations with Medwin, Byron jokingly referred to this rumour and surmised that "this dark hint took its origin from one of my Notes in 'The Giaour'" (Medwin 223; also see *BLJ* 7: 220). However, rather than warranting a straightforwardly autobiographical interpretation like Goethe's, *The Giaour* provides contradictory evidence. On the one hand, it indeed features annotations that stress the self-revelatory and factual nature of the poem and even insinuate that the personal anecdotes in the notes are only the tip of the iceberg. On the other hand, it hints at the contrary, implying that the poem is not at all autobiographical but based on literature, history, and an aesthetic programme that relied on guilt-ridden, brooding protagonists.

The note on second-hearing and the one on corpses also show how vastly Byron's self-presentation differs from annotation to annotation. While the note on the facial expression of corpses creates the impression that the author harbours terrible secrets and witnessed events that he dares only allude to in a roundabout way, annotations like the one on second-hearing call into question this gloomy image. This annotation suggests that, unlike the Giaour, Byron is not a misanthropic loner. Instead, it portrays him as someone who cares for those around him, e.g. relating how he enquired after Tahiri when he thought that he was in pain. Even more prominently, Byron depicts himself as a waggish, cheerful man of the world, without the least tinge of sorrow or suffering ("quickeared predestinarian"; "saying a variety of brilliant things [...] upon the mistaken seer"; "deranged into an antiquarian"). Though this annotation certainly paints him as a fascinating man – stressing his command of several languages that the ordinary English reader (or poet) would not understand and asserting that he knows modern Greece well enough to be able to judge where to expect robbers –, the fascination arises from him being a fun-loving and knowledgeable adventurer rather than a tormented, mysterious pariah.[64] Thus, the annotation serves to complicate readers' notion of who the 'real' Byron is and of how many of his experiences, feelings, and opinions can actually be found in the dark and violent poem.[65]

64 One must notice, however, that the outcome of the anecdote casts some doubt on Byron's intimate knowledge of Greece since it shows that he severely misjudged the dangerousness of the situation.

65 As in the case of *CHP*, contemporary reviewers were very divided over these questions. The *Critical Review* (vol. 4, no. 1, July 1813), for instance, argues that *The Giaour* shows Byron's real feelings on religion and that the annotation on the different facial expressions of corpses is "evidently the result of personal observation" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 62; 68). The *Scots Magazine* (Oct. 1813) – likewise detecting the author in the poem – argues that Byron is inspired by a (typically Haroldian) "premature satiety of all things" and that his works are "deeply impregnated with gloomy views of human life and human fate" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 769). Other critics were more sceptical. Both the *British*

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II. The Ambiguous Sincerity of The Giaour*, or: Annotator Byron vs. Author Byron?*
While the previous section mainly focussed on the different autobiographical and non-autobiographical *sources* of the poem that the annotations alternately propose and deny, the present part will be concerned with the *attitudes* that the annotations express towards the poem. In other words, it focuses less on how the notes ambiguate the issue whether *The Giaour* is based on Byron's life and more on what they suggest about the author's opinion of his poem and the feelings expressed in it. The verse part in *The Giaour* seems to be entirely serious, but the comical annotations raise doubts about this. Is Byron perhaps making fun of his own poem? Is *The Giaour* a parody of an oriental tale rather than an oriental tale proper?[66] If one subscribes to this interpretation, one cannot simultaneously claim that Byron is using the poem to express his sincere feelings and opinions. (However, the notion that *nothing* of the 'real' Byron can be found in the poem is called into question by yet another annotation. This will be discussed in the next section.)

In the note on second-hearing quoted earlier, there was a clear contrast between the tone of the annotated passage and that of the note. In the poem, both the communicative situation (the Giaour's dying confession) and the event that the protagonist refers to (i.e. Taheer prophesising to Hassan that he will die soon) are entirely serious.[67] There is no indication in the narrative itself to suggest that readers should ridicule any of the three characters for

Review (vol. 5, no. 9, Oct. 1813) and the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 21, no. 42, July 1813) see the Giaour as a literary stereotype rather than as Byron's alter ego. The former comments that the protagonist is "evidently one of those persons whom poetry and the German drama have, under various modifications, so frequently introduced to us" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 144), while the latter argues that the Giaour has the "fiery soul of the Marmion and Bertram of Scott" combined with "the constitutional gloom and the mingled disdain and regret for human nature, which were *invented* for Childe Harold" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 301, my emphasis). And the *Anti-Jacobin* (vol. 45, no. 183, Aug. 1813) does not even attempt to resolve the ambiguity: noting that a feeling of disappointed love runs through the poem, it comments: "Whether this be only assumed, for the purpose of heightening the poetical effect, or whether it really proceed from the heart, we presume not to decide" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 127).

66 This is, for example, tentatively suggested by Ravelhofer (cf. 30).

67 It has to be noted that – apart from the annotated passage discussed here – the poem makes no mention of the fact that Hassan knew that he was destined to be killed by the Giaour on this day. Quite on the contrary: during the fight, Hassan asserts that "'[t]hough far and near the bullets hiss, / I've scaped a bloodier hour than this'" (*Giaour* 595–96) and that the Giaour will not be saved from death (cf. 617). This internal contradiction may be due to the complicated composition history of *The Giaour*. One might also suspect that Byron was so eager to include the anecdote on second-hearing that he cared little whether or not the annotated passage presented a 'continuity error'.

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their belief in second-hearing. Things look differently in the annotation which constantly pokes fun at the concept of second-hearing and Tahiri's belief in it. Byron's "quickeared predestinarian" may have been right in the anecdote related in the note, but the annotation insinuates that his prophecies owe more to chance than to talent and suspects that Byron's former servant is "now hearing more musquetry than ever will be fired, to the great refreshment of the Arnaouts of Berat". Though the annotation leaves it up to readers whether they interpret the anecdote as an instance of actual fore-hearing or of sheer luck, Byron's own sceptical attitude towards second-hearing becomes rather clear.

One facetious annotation alone, however, would hardly have been enough to warrant the indignant comments by reviewers quoted above. In fact, there are at least five other comical annotations in *The Giaour* that likewise present a jarring contrast to the serious or even melodramatic passages to which they are appended.[68] Four of them are explanatory notes; one is a faux-editorial annotation. (One of these comical explanatory annotations will only be mentioned in a footnote because it is very similar to one of the other notes discussed here in detail; see n 71 below).

The first instance occurs in the famous lines that compare the "Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes" (*Giaour* 422) to a scorpion that, when surrounded by fire, commits suicide by stinging itself. The annotated part reads:

> So do the dark in soul expire,
> Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
> So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,

68 To these five, one may perhaps add four minor instances. The first is the annotation which explains that "[g]reen is the privileged colour of the prophet's numerous pretended descendants; with them, as here, faith (the family inheritance) is supposed to supersede the necessity of good works; they are the worst of a very indifferent brood" (*Giaour* 357n; *CPW* 3: 418). The second note makes fun of one of the Muslim narrators within the Levantine story-teller's narrative, who believes that women have no soul. It explains that this is "[a] vulgar error; the Koran allots at least a third of Paradise to well-behaved women; but by far the greater number of Mussulmans interpret the text their own way, and exclude their moieties from heaven" (*Giaour* 488n; *CPW* 3: 419). The third is the annotation on vampires, which slightingly refers to a "long story" about these creatures told by "Honest Tournefort" and to Southey's misspelling of the modern Greek term for them (*Giaour* 755n; *CPW* 3: 420). The fourth is appended to a passage uttered by an unknown, featureless speaker – most likely the European traveller. As he muses on desolation and loneliness, he reflects: "It is as if the desart-bird, / Whose beak unlocks her bosom's stream / To still her famish'd nestlings' scream, / [...] / Should rend her rash devoted breast, / And find them flown her empty nest" (*Giaour* 951–56). The annotation for these lines raises doubts about the veracity of this notion and quips: "The pelican is, I believe, the bird so libelled, by the imputation of feeding her chickens with her blood" (*Giaour* 951n; *CPW* 3: 421).

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> Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
> Darkness above, despair beneath,
> Around it flame, within it death! – (*Giaour* 433–38)

The forceful (and rather histrionic) passage is then followed by this annotation:

> Alluding to the dubious suicide of the scorpion, so placed for experiment by gentle philosophers. Some maintain that the position of the sting, when turned towards the head, is merely a convulsive movement; but others have actually brought in the verdict 'Felo de se'. The scorpions are surely interested in a speedy decision of the question; as, if once established as insect Catos, they will probably be allowed to live as long as they think proper, without being martyred for the sake of an hypothesis. (*Giaour* 434n; *CPW* 3: 418)

The annotation is highly ironic ("gentle philosophers") and jarringly combines the notion of a scientific experiment with religious ("martyred") and judicial language ("verdict 'Felo de se'"). A great part of the humour of the annotation also derives from it allowing the scorpions a human-like consciousness: they are "interested in a speedy decision" so that they can go on to "live as long as they think proper", and their actions are likened to Cato the Younger's heroic suicide. Furthermore, the annotation even questions the veracity of what is asserted in the annotated passage and remarks that some scientists doubt whether scorpions surrounded by fire intentionally kill themselves. The annotation does not serve to help readers understand the image used in the passage (its meaning becomes quite clear from the poem alone) but instead subverts the image itself.

The next facetiously annotated passage is spoken by one of the Muslim narrators.[69] He describes how Leila's "Soul beam'd forth in every spark" (477) and goes on to reinforce this metaphor thus:

> Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say
> That form was nought but breathing clay,
> By Alla! I would answer nay;
> Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
> Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
> With Paradise within my view,
> And all his Houris beckoning through. (480–486)

69 Kroeber, Sundell, and Shilstone argue that the narrator in this passage is the fisherman, who also spoke at the beginning of *The Giaour* (lines 180–276), but this is unlikely (cf. Kroeber 140; Sundell 590; Shilstone 54). The narrator in the present passage briefly refers to the scene that the fisherman witnessed at the beach and introduces it thus: "But *others* say, that on that night" (*Giaour* 467, my emphasis). This suggests that the narrator of this passage cannot be identical with the fisherman and that, instead, he is yet another Muslim narrator.

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The narrator hyperbolically praises Leila by arguing that, even if he stood on the narrow bridge leading over hell, he would contradict the prophet Mohammed and deny what he believes to be a Muslim tenet, namely that women do not have souls (this belief is called a "vulgar error" in an annotation for line 488, see n 68 above). What adds to the extravagance of the passage is that the narrator implies that he would do so even if he saw that there are no women in paradise but that they had been replaced by the Houris (cf. also *Giaour* 488n). The annotation, then, reads:

> Al-Sirat, the bridge of breadth less than the thread of a famished spider, over which the Mussulmans must *skate* into Paradise, to which it is the only entrance; but this is not the worst, the river beneath being hell itself, into which, as may be expected, the unskilful and tender of foot contrive to tumble with a 'facilis descensus Averni', not very pleasing in prospect to the next passenger. There is a shorter cut downwards for the Jews and Christians. (*Giaour* 483n, original emphasis; *CPW* 3: 418–19)

The humorous effect of the annotation mainly derives from the fact that it literalises the religious allegory represented by the bridge Al-Sirat. This becomes especially apparent by comparing the annotation in *The Giaour* with its source, which is a note in *Vathek*.[70] After having explained how narrow and dangerous the bridge is, the note in *Vathek* specifies that "[t]hese indeed who have behaved well need not be alarmed; mixed characters will find it difficult; but the wicked soon miss their standing, and plunge headlong onto the abyss" (Beckford 314). The note in *Vathek* explains that Al-Sirat is only an allegory for how one's entry into paradise depends on one's actions and, we may suppose, religious beliefs. The Muslim narrator in *The Giaour* hence implies that, in order to compliment Leila, he would severely endanger his safe crossing of the bridge by contradicting what he believes to be one of the dogmas of his religion. In this poetical passage in *The Giaour* and in the note for *Vathek*, the crossing of Al-Sirat is a matter of morality rather than agility. The note in *The Giaour*, then, completely disregards this moral aspect; it takes the image literally and only focuses on the dangers that await the "unskilful and tender of foot". The humour of the annotation is further enhanced by the irreverent and euphemistic depiction of people trying to "*skate* into Paradise" and "tumbling" down the bridge, which is "not very pleasing in prospect to the next passenger".[71]

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70 I quote from the 1786 edition of *Vathek* (English, with more than 100 pages of notes) which Byron owned (cf. Cochran, *Byron's Library* 15; 55).

71 There is another facetious note in *The Giaour* that works very similarly to the note on Al-Sirat. The annotated passage contains direct speech by a Muslim character, but it is not clear by whom exactly (possible candidates are the fisherman, the same unidentifiable narrator as in the Al-Sirat passage, Hassan's mother, or even the Levantine coffee-house

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The next example occurs in the context of the fight between Hassan and the Giaour. When Hassan realises that the Arnauts have secured the only way through which he and his Tartars could escape, we are told by an unidentifiable narrator that "[t]hen curl'd his very beard with ire" (*Giaour* 593). Arguably, even this image itself is quite bathetic but – without the note and given the absence of other cartoonish depictions of Hassan in the poem – it is not enough to dispel the sense of threat and valour emanating from this character in the passage. One might even suspect that this ridiculous detail (which might easily be overlooked without the note drawing attention to it) was only included so that the following annotation could be appended to it:

> A phenomenon not uncommon with an angry Mussulman. In 1809, the Capitan Pacha's whiskers at a diplomatic audience were no less lively with indignation than a tiger cat's, to the horror of all the dragomans; the portentous mustachios twisted, they stood erect of their own accord, and were expected every moment to change their colour, but at last condescended to subside, which, probably, saved more heads than they contained hairs. (*Giaour* 593n; *CPW* 3: 419)

Unlike the annotation on the suicidal scorpion, the annotation here *confirms* rather than calls into question what is asserted in the poem, anticipating the objection that it is impossible for a beard to curl with anger.[72] In this instance, as opposed to the notes on Al-Sirat and on Monkir (for the latter, see n 71), the

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storyteller himself). The speaker curses the Giaour and prophesises that he shall writhe "[b]eneath avenging Monkir's scythe" for having killed Hassan (*Giaour* 748). The corresponding annotation explains that "Monkir and Nekir are the inquisitors of the dead, before whom the corpse undergoes a slight noviciate and preparatory training for damnation. If the answers are none of the clearest, he is hauled up with a scythe and thumped down with a red hot mace till properly seasoned, with a variety of subsidiary probations. The office of these angels is no sinecure; there are but two; and the number of orthodox deceased being in a small proportion to the remainder, their hands are always full" (*Giaour* 748n; *CPW* 3: 420). As in the note on Al-Sirat, this annotation makes fun of the religious notion which is put forward seriously by a Muslim character. The method employed is a mix of the notes on the scorpion and on Al-Sirat. For one, like the scorpion note, this annotation jumbles together different registers, combining a term carrying Christian associations ("noviciate"), with the context of education and sports ("preparatory training"), woodworking or cooking ("properly seasoned"), as well as with the field of modern religious or government posts ("sinecure"), none of which are particularly apt in the context of explaining Muslim beliefs of the afterlife. Furthermore, like the note on Al-Sirat, it makes light of the danger that is being evoked in the poem, calling being tortured by two demons "a slight noviciate and preparatory training".

72 I could not find any literary (or actual) models – oriental or otherwise – for the beard curling with ire before 1813; it does not seem to have been a common notion. Byron does not mention the anecdote of the Captain Pacha's lively whiskers elsewhere.

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annotation partly defends the notions expressed in the passage. Nevertheless, the annotation is curiously two-pronged and points out the amusing in the midst of the horrible. It becomes clear that the Pacha was on the brink of executing numerous people, but the incident is still described in rather humorous terms (the whiskers making strange movements and being compared to those of a cat). The curling beard emblematises both Hassan's fierceness and the Captain Pacha's threatening nature, but it also introduces a hint of ludicrousness into their characterisation.

Apart from these facetious explanatory notes, we can also find a subversive, faux-editorial annotation towards the end of the poem. It is appended to a passage that does, in fact, not exist. The note appears in the middle of the Giaour's dying confession, right after he protests that his "grief / Looks not to priesthood for relief" (*Giaour* 1206–07), and reads:

> The monk's sermon is omitted. It seems to have had so little effect upon the patient, that it could have no hopes from the reader. It may be sufficient to say, that it was of a customary length (as may be perceived from the interruptions and uneasiness of the penitent), and was delivered in the nasal tone of all orthodox preachers. (*Giaour* 1207n; *CPW* 3: 422)

The note's irreverent tone clashes with the terms in which the Giaour himself addresses the monk: he imagines that the monk is "without a crime or care" (974) and has a "pure and pitying breast" (981), before going on to call him his "holy guide" (1121) and thanking him "for the generous tear" (1322). The Giaour could, of course, also be ironic in these instances, but there is no textual evidence to substantiate this possibility. In any case, the annotation disrupts the mood of the melancholy scene by attributing the Giaour's "uneasiness" not to his grief and despair but to the monk's long-winded sermon.[73] In the poem,

73 It is not entirely clear what Byron means by the Giaour's "interruptions" of the monk's sermon, but several instances in his dying confession might qualify as such: "Nay, start not" (1036), "Why marvel ye?" (1149), "But talk no more of penitence" (1202), "But would'st thou pity more – say less" (1209), "Tell me no more of fancy's gleam" (1257), as well as "Waste not thine orison" (1267).

On the one hand, this annotation reinforces the (still rather transparent) illusion that *The Giaour* is an authentic Turkish tale which was only edited by a European traveller, who chose to omit this part of the original story. On the other hand, the phrasing of the annotation seems to imply that the 'editor' had witnessed the monk's sermon in person (he relates how it was "delivered in the nasal tone"), but this is implausible given that, according to the last note in *The Giaour*, the 'editor' only heard the Levantine's performance in the coffee-house. Either the note is meant to inform us that the Levantine storyteller included this sermon in his tale and that *he* recited it "in the nasal tone of all orthodox preachers", or Byron accidentally (and metaleptically) made the European

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the Giaour is not bored; he is despondent and rejects salvation ("I would not, if I might, be blest, / I want no paradise – but rest"; 1269–70). The annotation makes light of the Giaour's feelings and, moreover, uses the opportunity to ridicule the monk. In the struggle between Islam and Christianity, which preoccupies many of the narrators and characters in *The Giaour*, the annotations do not take a side: just like other notes poke fun at the Muslim notions of Al-Sirat and the demons Monkir and Nekir, this one facetiously undermines the Christian's efforts. The poem does not specify which of the monks is attending the Giaour. Most likely it is the prior, who – despite the protestations of his brothers – lets the Giaour stay in the monastery, or (less likely) the monk who earlier (798–831; 883–915) talked to the Muslim fisherman and who is very critical of the Giaour, arguing that "were I Prior, not a day / Should brook such stranger's further stay" (818–19). If we assume that it is indeed the prior who is listening to the Giaour's dying confession, there is nothing in the poem itself that justifies the note's ridicule of him. Thus, the annotation supplies a negative or at least comical characterisation that is quite inconsistent with the annotated text: just like there is almost nothing in the poem that makes Hassan appear ridiculous and cartoonish (although he is sometimes presented as villainous),[74] there is nothing in the poem that makes the prior seem particularly orthodox, incompetent, or boring.

As Mole and Chatsiou have pointed out, the irreverent annotations in *The Giaour* make us wonder about Byron's attitude towards his own poem (cf. Mole, "Narrative Desire and the Body in *The Giaour*" 92–93; Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics* 113–14n148). Does he make fun of its melodrama and, perhaps, even of the genre of oriental tales in general? Is Byron trying to prevent readers from identifying him with the Giaour? In other words, can we find the feelings and opinions of the 'real' Byron in the annotations, whereas the poem is only peopled with wholly fictional and deliberately ludicrous narrators and characters?

III. The Giaour *as Editorial Fiction, or: Who Makes Fun of Whom?*

One of the aspects that makes it rather difficult to answer these questions is the fact that *The Giaour* contains a hint that *neither* the poem *nor* the notes can

'editor' a first-hand observer of the Giaour's dying confession. The latter possibility is not altogether inconceivable given that the passage and the annotation were only added in the seventh edition, more than half a year after *The Giaour* had first been published.

74 The negative characterisation of Hassan is, however, counteracted by the unidentified Muslim narrator ("For Courtesy and Pity died / With Hassan on the mountain side", 346–47) and even partly by the Giaour himself, who argues that he would have acted like Hassan if Leila had betrayed him as well ("Yet did he but what I had done / Had she been false to more than one", 1062–63).

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be straightforwardly attributed to the 'real' Byron. The last annotation on the poem (present from the very first edition onwards) explains that

> [t]he story in the text is one told of a young Venetian many years ago, and now nearly forgotten. – I heard it by accident recited by one of the coffee-house story-tellers who abound in the Levant, and sing or recite their narratives. – The additions and interpolations by the translator will be easily distinguished from the rest by the want of Eastern imagery; and I regret that my memory has retained so few fragments of the original. (*Giaour* 1334n; *CPW* 3: 423)[75]

The note hence claims that the poem is, for the most part, only a translation of a Levantine tale.[76] Based on this annotation, *The Giaour* can be read as an example of editorial fiction.[77] As such, it stands in the tradition of, for instance, the *Nouvelle Héloïse*[78] and *Vathek*, both of which pretend that they are merely editions or translations of other persons' writings.[79] The entire poem in *The Giaour* is thus presented as the work of two different 'authors': a Levantine coffee-house storyteller and a European traveller. The latter translated the passages that he remembered from the storyteller's recital and added a few poetic "interpolations" composed by himself.[80]

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75 Since the annotation in which this frame narrative is introduced only appears at the very end of the poem, one has to keep in mind that, in a *first* perusal, readers are not aware of the editorial framing. The last annotation, hence, retrospectively ambiguates the poem. My discussion thus refers to a *second* reading, during which readers are already aware of the presence of the 'European traveller' in the notes and the interpolations.

76 Susan Matthias briefly reflects on the idea of *The Giaour* as a "mock translation" and remarks that the manuscript title of the work was *The Giaour, Fragments of a Turkish Tale, Translated* (Matthias 99). However, she does not discuss what this means for the interaction between the poem and the facetious notes.

77 Ravelhofer likewise discusses *The Giaour* as editorial fiction, focussing on its framing of the (allegedly) oral nature of the 'original' Turkish tale.

78 Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* likewise features annotations in which the fictional 'editor' makes fun of the letters he is editing. It is possible that Byron even drew inspiration from this work for *The Giaour*. For further details, see p. 232 above.

79 Samuel Rogers's editorial fiction *The Voyage of Columbus* (in the 1812 version) is also often cited as a model for *The Giaour* (cf. Gleckner 91; McGann, *Fiery Dust* 142; Peterson 28–29; Seed 15). For a brief discussion of this work and its annotations, see p. 234 above.

80 In the cancelled preface to the first two cantos of *Don Juan*, Byron would later make fun of editorial fictions containing such "interpolations". Referring to Wordsworth's "The Thorn" in which the author asks readers to imagine that the poem is spoken by the Captain of a small trading vessel, Byron requests his readers "to suppose by a like exertion of Imagination – that the following epic Narrative is told by a Spanish Gentleman[.] […] Having supposed as much of this as the utter impossibility of such a supposition will admit – the reader is requested to extend his supposed power of supposing so far as to

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As the use of the first person in the annotation above shows, readers are to imagine that the European traveller not only translated parts of the original story and composed the interpolations but supplied the annotations as well. There are more reasons why the annotations can be attributed to this traveller: (1) it is highly unlikely that the Levantine storyteller should be imagined as constantly interrupting his oral recital to add explanations, (2) the annotations elucidate terms and concepts that the storyteller's original audience would have been well-acquainted with, and (3) the notes usually imply that they have been prepared by an outsider writing about Eastern customs and beliefs. Jerome McGann and Susan Matthias likewise attribute the notes to the European traveller (cf. McGann, *Beauty of Inflections* 263; Matthias 99).

Since *The Giaour* is an editorial fiction, readers have to wonder who exactly is supposed to be annotating and who is supposed to be annotated, i.e. who is responsible for the feelings and opinions expressed in the annotations and in the poem. McGann, for example, reads the European traveller as being identical with the actual Byron (cf. McGann, *Beauty of Inflections* 263). This interpretation, however, either presupposes that readers see through the editorial fiction but still perceive of the 'editor' as Byron's alter ego through which he can express his feelings and opinions, or that they take the editorial fiction at face value and believe that *The Giaour* is, for the most part, indeed a story that the 'real' Byron only overheard, translated, and annotated.[81] In the latter

conceive that the dedication to Mr. Southey – & several stanzas of the poem itself are interpolated by the English Editor" (*CPW* 5: 81; 83–84).

81 *The Giaour* was published only a few decades after Macpherson's Ossian poems, Chatterton's Thomas Rowley poems, and Beckford's *Vathek*, and only shortly after Samuel Rogers's *The Voyage of Columbus* and Thomas Moore's *The Poems of Thomas Little*. Given their experience with such works, readers were, of course, wary whenever they encountered a 'found' manuscript or an 'overheard' story. However, as the annotations in both *CHP* and *The Giaour* constantly reminded them, Byron (unlike Beckford, for example) had been to the East. Thus, despite the era's penchant for editorial fiction, it was not inconceivable for contemporaries that *this* 'overheard' story was, for once, authentic and that Byron was indeed only the translator, annotator, and interpolator of an original Turkish story. In an addition to the last annotation on *The Giaour* (the addition was first included in the fourth ed.), however, Byron raises doubts about his 'overheard' story by discussing the (in)authenticity of *Vathek*, thus drawing attention to the similarly dubious origins of *The Giaour* (cf. *Giaour* 1334n; *CPW* 3: 423). Furthermore, Byron's affirmation – for a passage that is allegedly part of the original Turkish story – that the "oriental simile" in it is "*fairly stolen*" from oriental literature though it may appear 'too oriental' to be authentic adds to the doubts about the existence of this original Turkish story (cf. *Giaour* 494n; *CPW* 3: 419, original emphasis). As McGann points out, the many additions to *The Giaour* that Byron made in later editions further undermined his fiction of the 'overheard' story: "Were his readers to assume, as each new and augmented edition of his 'snake of

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case, Byron does not speak *through* the fictional European traveller, he *is* the European traveller and expresses his own thoughts in the interpolations and the notes. (For interpreting the notes, the distinction between Byron as editor vs. Byron as speaking through the editor is, however, rather negligible.) The last option – not covered by McGann – is that readers see through the editorial fiction and choose *not* to fully equate Byron and the fictional traveller, rather seeing the editorial fiction as a means of distancing the author from the editor persona.

The function fulfilled by the editorial fiction in *The Giaour* is, hence, ambiguous: it can serve to *insert* the 'real' Byron into the work – suggesting that the feelings and opinions that the 'editor' expresses in the annotations and interpolations are actually the author's –, or it can imply that Byron created the persona of the 'editor' in order to *dissociate* himself from the attitudes expressed in the interpolations and the notes.[82]

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a poem' came out, that he periodically recalled additional snatches of the original lay?" (McGann, *Fiery Dust* 143).

Reviews show that contemporary readers were divided over the existence of Byron's 'overheard' story. The *British Review* (vol. 5, no. 9, Oct. 1813), for instance, comments that they at first erroneously "thought it to have been the translation of a genuine portion of a Turkish poem" but that they were soon undeceived ("Review of *The Giaour*" 133). The *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 21, no. 42, July 1813) is in two minds about the question. They argue that "Turk or Christian" might have written the poem, but that they do "not think any other but Lord Byron himself could have imparted the force and the character which are conspicuous in the fragments" ("Review of *The Giaour*" 300). Later on, they conjecture that "the Turkish original of the tale is attested, to all but the bolder sceptics of literature, by the great variety of untranslated words" (308). The *Quarterly Review* (vol. 10, no. 20, Jan. 1814) seems (or pretends) to blindly trust the annotation, speculating that the character of the Giaour "was, perhaps, further recommended to Lord Byron, by a recollection of the scene in which he first heard it [the tale], of the impression which it made on the eastern audience, and of the grotesque declamations and gestures of the Turkish storyteller" ("Review of *The Giaour* and of *The Bride of Abydos*" 333).

82 In one case, i.e. the note on second-hearing discussed above, the difference between the 'real' Byron and the fictional editor is being blurred. This note makes clear that in it the real-life Byron rather than any fictional annotator persona is speaking: it provides various autobiographical details (the trip to Cape Colonna, the names of Byron's Albanian servants, the group almost being attacked by robbers), all of which are verified outside *The Giaour* itself – in the notes to *CHP*. This raises the question whether Byron is, in fact, also directly speaking in all other annotations to *The Giaour* or whether the straightforwardly autobiographical note on second-hearing is an exception. This example shows that there are instances in which the "I" in an annotation straightforwardly refers to the actual Byron (as in this note for 1077) and instances in which the "I" in an annotation refers to the European traveller, who may or may not be equated with Byron (as in the very last note on the poem, in which the editorial fiction is being established).

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The interpolations attributed to the 'European traveller' only make up a small portion of the poem, i.e. lines 1–167 (on the dire state of contemporary Greece), 388–438 (the similes of the butterfly and of the scorpion), and 916–970 (reflections on love and solitude).[83] The rest of the poem allegedly belongs to the original Turkish tale related by the Levantine story-teller – the various sections within this tale can be attributed to several different narrators (e.g. the fisherman) and speaking characters (e.g. the Giaour).[84] In some cases, it is not entirely clear who is narrating.[85] Unlike his notes, the poetic interpolations by the 'European editor' are entirely serious and chime in with the gloomy and rather bombastic tone of the rest of the poem. Thus, the 'editor' shows two different responses to the Levantine story – a sympathetic one in the poem and a ridiculing one in the notes.[86] (The possible effects of these contradictory reactions will be discussed in more detail below.)

Given the multitude of voices in *The Giaour*, whose words are, in fact, being targeted by the facetious annotations? The passages on the bridge Al-Sirat, on Hassan's curling beard, and on the demons Monkir and Nekir are uttered by Muslim speakers and are part of the 'original' Turkish tale. In these instances, the annotations make fun of the opinions of minor characters, who feel antagonistic towards the Giaour. Thus, the ironic annotations appended to these passages neither ridicule the Giaour, nor the European traveller – the two

83 This identification is based on the fact that these passages do not contain any Eastern imagery (the touchstone for differentiating between the two 'authors' mentioned in the note) and that they neither recount any event related to the plot nor feature any of the characters of the main narrative. This description is for the most part consistent with Shilstone's analysis, who, however, does not distinguish between those passages 'told' by the Levantine and those 'added' by the European 'editor' and argues instead that there is one overarching author-persona who ventriloquises different narrators (cf. Shilstone 52–55). According to him, the interpolations are spoken by this fictionalised author-persona directly (cf. 49; 52). He also attributes the last six lines of the poem (1329–1443) to this persona (cf. Shilstone 257n19).

84 The question which narrator is responsible for which passage (as well as the question how many narrators there are in the first place) is discussed, for example, by Karl Kroeber (cf. 140), Michael Sundell (cf. 590), Frederick Shilstone (cf. 52–55), Jerome McGann (cf. *Fiery Dust* 142–46), Robert Gleckner (cf. *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise* 98–117), and Christoph Bode (cf. "Byron's Dis-Orientations" 76–78). For my own attempt at identifying both the speakers and the 'authors' of each passage in *The Giaour*, see p. 402f.

85 For example, the passage in which the Giaour is cursed (723–786) could be spoken by the heterodiegetic Levantine story-teller or by one of the homodiegetic Muslim characters (e.g. the fisherman or Hassan's mother).

86 This makes the interaction between poem and notes in *The Giaour* quite similar to that in Byron's "Lachin Y Gair", where the speaker enthusiastically responds to the natives' tales in the poem itself but expresses scepticism of them in the annotations. For a longer discussion, see chapter 3.4.1.

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characters that (Byron had to assume) readers were most likely to identify with the author. The three other facetious annotations, however, are more unsettling. The passage on the suicidal scorpion occurs in one of the interpolations allegedly added by the European 'editor', which might suggest that this 'editor' (who may or may not be equated with Byron) is partly poking fun at his own work.[87] The note on second-hearing is appended to a line spoken by the Giaour, while the annotation justifying the 'editorial choice' to omit the sermon is targeted at a (non-existing) passage spoken by the prior. In these three cases, thus, the ridicule is directed at the two characters that readers could, theoretically, equate with Byron (the protagonist and the European editor) as well as at a speaker who acts benignly towards the Giaour and whom Christian readers would most likely perceive as the only morally upright character in the poem (perhaps together with the other monk, who is speaking to the fisherman at 787–831). What, then, does all of this mean for the effect of the annotations and the search for the 'real' Byron in *The Giaour*?

IV. Ambivalence, Romantic Irony, and 'Mobility'

As we have seen, the opinions and attitudes expressed in the facetious annotations can either be attributed to a completely fictional editor persona, who must not be equated with the actual author, or to the 'real' Byron himself (who, in this case, would be seen as either identical with the editor or as using the fictional editor as his mouthpiece). The irreverence of the annotations targets both passages that were allegedly part of the original Levantine tale and such as were supposedly added by the European editor. They ridicule characters that readers might wish to associate with the actual author (i.e. the protagonist and the 'editor') and such as are more or less dissociated from him. There are several ways in which this complex interplay of different voices, of poem and notes, can be read.[88]

87 The comical annotation on the 'libelled pelican' (briefly mentioned above on p. 271 n above) is likewise appended to one of the interpolations (cf. *Giaour* 951n; *CPW* 3: 421).

88 Two other approaches to the notes of *The Giaour* will only briefly be mentioned here because they do not directly deal with the contrast between the serious poem and the comical notes. Firstly, Barbara Ravelhofer argues that the notes are meant to be "a swipe at Robert Southey's metrical romance *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), in which orientalist subject matter was heavily glossed by long-winded, ponderous annotations" (Ravelhofer 27). However, apart from one reference to Southey's poem in the note for line 755, there is no evidence that the notes in *The Giaour* specifically target those in *Thalaba* (or any other of Southey's verse tales). The notes for *Thalaba* mainly consist of quotes, i.e. it is usually not Southey who is being long-winded and ponderous (and who might be ridiculed for being so) but the authors he is quoting. Hence, even if the annotations in *The Giaour* parodied those in *Thalaba* (which they do not), the parody would be directed at Southey's sources

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Jerome McGann puts special focus on the fact that the contributions of the European editor (whom he equates with Byron) contradict each other: Byron's poetic interpolations are characterised by a "complete romantic sympathy with the characters and events as well as an absorption in the heroic ideology which they exhibit", while his annotations are a "mordant series of comical remarks on Eastern mores and commonplace European ideas" (McGann, *Beauty of Inflections* 263). Up to this point, I agree with McGann (though not with his argument that the 'editor' must definitely be read as Byron). However, he then argues that these contrasting responses to the main narrative show that "the European understanding of the Levant between 1780–1813 [...] is self-deluded and helpless" and that they reflect Byron's "exposure to this failed understanding" (263). This conclusion is not convincing. There is no evidence that the European 'editor' fails to understand Eastern notions and beliefs. Quite on the contrary: the notes suggest that he *does* understand their underlying concepts perfectly well – he just does not take them (entirely) seriously. Another of McGann's points, i.e. his observation that the annotations might not be completely humorous but rather a "flinching away, the laughter, spoken of in *Don Juan*, which serves to hold back weeping and bleaker realities" (263–64), will become important below.

As shown above, the very last annotation on *The Giaour* can either be read as Byron retrospectively distancing himself from the work (suggesting that it is just a playful editorial fiction and that the 'editor' does not express the author's own opinions) or as retrospectively inserting himself into it (insinuating that he himself is the European traveller or, at least, that he is using this persona as his mouthpiece). These two possibilities of who can be seen as speaking in the notes and interpolations give rise to three ways of interpreting the interplay between poem and notes and of answering the question where the 'real' Byron is to be found in *The Giaour*: (1) he is only to be found in the notes, (2) he is to be found neither in the poem nor in the notes, or (3) he is only found in the interaction between serious poem and facetious notes. As will be shown, read

rather than at the poet himself. Furthermore, as has been noted above, many annotations in *The Giaour* are (at least content-wise) drawn from Beckford's *Vathek*, rather than from any of Southey's works. It is unlikely that Byron's use of *Vathek* (one of his favourite novels) is meant to be parodic. Second, Ruth Knezevich contends that the annotations in *The Giaour* "attempt to force the fragmented verse into a linear, objective model of narrative and scholarship. They represent an authorial and authorizing act that I shall describe as 'textual imperialism'" (Knezevich 37). However, the very presence of the facetious, irreverent notes in *The Giaour* and the fact that they also make fun of the Christian prior and the European 'editor' counters Knezevich's argument that the notes are mainly authoritative, objective, and imperialistic. Quite on the contrary: as shown here, they serve to complicate rather than fix or simplify the meaning of the work.

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in the light of Byron's whole œuvre (especially the discussion of 'mobility' in *Don Juan*), the third appears to be the more plausible reading, yet even this option is rendered dubious by the very passages that seem to suggest it in the first place. As he does so often, Byron presents readers with multiple possibilities of finding him in his works but playfully renders them unable to choose between them.

All three possibilities of where the real Byron is to be found in *The Giaour* are related to Romantic irony.[89] Romantic irony is, of course, a notoriously slippery concept, and authors have used the textual strategies associated with it in vastly different ways and for different purposes. Broadly speaking, the term is usually employed to describe three different but interconnected phenomena: (A) a philosophical attitude according to which one perceives the world as highly chaotic and contradictory, and, as a consequence, adopts an ambivalent attitude towards it (cf. Wellek 14; Furst 228, 231; Mellor 4); (B) the ambivalent attitude of artists towards their own work and subject matter, as well as towards the representational quality of art in general (cf. Immerwahr 673; Bishop 1, 7; Strohschneider-Kohrs 37, 49, 70, 75; Wellek 14); and (C) the textual phenomena in which (A) and (B) manifest themselves. These are mainly (C.a) deliberately unresolved contradictions within a text (cf. Furst 228; Mellor 18), (C.b) the destruction of the fictional illusion through self-reflexive remarks (cf. Bishop 7; Mellor 17–18; Immerwahr 666; Furst 231; Strohschneider-Kohrs 49), and (C.c) "rapid mood swings" (Bone, "Romantic Irony Revisited" 240) or the juxtaposition of the serious and the comical (cf. Strohschneider-Kohrs 75–77). In the interplay of poem and notes in *The Giaour*, we can indeed find all three textual phenomena associated with Romantic irony: the contradictions which

89 Byron did most likely not know Friedrich Schlegel's reflections on Romantic irony (cf. Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics* 84). He does not make any reference to the concept in his works or letters; the first and only time that he (disparagingly) mentions Schlegel is in 1821, i.e. eight years after the publication of *The Giaour* and almost two years after he had published the first two cantos of *Don Juan* (cf. *BLJ* 8: 38–40). In 1816, Byron met Friedrich Schlegel's brother August at Coppet, but he does not mention having discussed his brother's philosophical ideas with him (cf. *BLJ* 8: 167; 172–73). Even though Byron did not know Schlegel's concept itself, it is nevertheless permissible to describe certain phenomena in his works as instances of Romantic irony. After all, Schlegel has to be seen as the *discoverer* rather than the inventor of the concept (cf. Immerwahr 665). In other words, the phenomena which are subsumed under the term 'Romantic irony' can be found in literature long before the Romantic age, and Schlegel was merely the first to draw a connection between a certain set of philosophical and literary notions, and to apply the term 'irony' to them. Rather than by Schlegel's theoretical considerations, Byron's use of textual strategies that are associated with Romantic irony was most likely influenced by his reading of Sterne, Fielding, Cervantes, Pulci, Berni, and Ariosto, as well as – later – of Casti and Frere (cf. Joseph 183–87; Fuess 143).

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are "carefully balance[d]" and which the author "refuses to synthesize or harmonize" (Mellor 18), the self-reflexive remarks which destroy the fictional illusion (especially in the annotation on the 'omitted' sermon and the note which turns the work into an editorial fiction), and, most prominently, the unsettling combination of gloom and facetiousness.

As Gavin Hopps has shown, many scholars who discuss Byron's Romantic irony move their focus away from ambivalence and instead insist that Byron's humour (especially in *Don Juan*) is sufficient to completely undermine the seriousness of his works (cf. Hopps 137–38).[90] This approach points to the first possible interpretation named above, namely that the 'real' Byron can only be found in the notes. For instance, Chatsiou, who also reads the notes of *The Giaour* against the backdrop of Romantic irony, interprets this concept as a destructive force, which "aggressively interrupts and subverts the poem's world of serious, sublime imagination" (Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 645). According to her, the comedy of the notes ultimately overpowers and supplants the melancholy of the poem. Romantic irony would, in this case, be an agent of disambiguation, which means that readers should see the Byron of the notes as the 'real' one, who is making fun of his own gloomy poem and ridicules the religious, moral, cultural, and emotional themes that are treated seriously in the poem itself. In this case, Byron would not distance himself from the whole work (as he would if one reads the 'editor' as a completely fictional character) but only from the typically 'Byronic' aspects of it – signalling to his audience that, in reality, he is more similar to the witty satirist of *EBSR* than to the melancholic protagonists and narrators of *CHP* and *The Giaour*. The latter are just fashionable poses – the 'real' Byron would be someone who does not take anything seriously, be it himself, his poetry, or human existence in general.

This reading, however, is too simplistic. The annotations can never completely undermine the gloominess of the poem. If one only reads the poem and ignores the notes (as many contemporaries of Byron suggested one should do in a first reading, see chapter 3.1.2)[91], *The Giaour* is an entirely serious work.

90 See, for example, Alexandra Böhm, who argues that in *Don Juan* Byron "brings the high claims of Romanticism back to the mundane materiality of life" (Böhm 182). When he uses Romantic irony to represent the "contrasting, paradoxical, and open heterogeneity and multiplicity of the real" and when he employs an "unexpected conjunction of incongruous elements", he never points to a "higher, transcendental synthesis" (183). According to her, Byron succeeds in the conjunction of opposites only on a worldly and often comical level; he never combines the mundane/facetious and the transcendental/serious in this way without entirely debasing the latter.

91 In the first six editions, the annotations in *The Giaour* were printed as footnotes; they were turned into endnotes from the seventh edition onwards (cf. Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 650). I agree with Chatsiou's argument that this change from foot- to endnotes was probably

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As opposed to *Don Juan*, where readers have no choice but to take heed of both the serious and the ridiculous aspects because both occur in the poem itself, readers of *The Giaour* can, theoretically, just focus on the poem and its melancholy (cf. Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 658–61). The tone and imagery of the poem may be exaggerated and overly melodramatic sometimes, but they never turn downright ludicrous and are almost always appropriate for what is being depicted: a desperate and guilty man is likened to a scorpion on the brink of committing suicide, a Muslim speaker uses the image of the bridge Al-Sirat to prove how much he admires Leila, another Muslim speaker envisions how the Giaour will be tortured by demons, and the dying protagonist thanks the prior for his sincere care and compassion. (Hassan's curling beard is the only outlier here.) In other words, the poem is an oriental tale in its own right rather than a parody of one, and the annotations cannot change this. A handful of facetious notes are not sufficient to undermine 1334 consistently serious lines of poetry.

Thus, rather than completely subverting the seriousness of the poem, the comedy of the annotations can be seen as an equally valid *alternative* to it. In this, I agree with Drummond Bone, Jane Stabler, and Gavin Hopps, who stress that, in Byron's case, Romantic irony usually results in a case of *both*/*and* rather than *either*/*or* (cf. Bone, "Romantic Irony Revisited" 240–47; Stabler, "Byron, Postmodernism and Intertextuality" 270; Hopps *passim*). Discussing a stanza which contains both an enthusiastic description of an odalisque and a comical remark on that description (*Don Juan* 6.68), Bone, for instance, remarks: "Do we read back and contaminate the particularity of the previous simile with the random materiality of the deconstructed one? I do not think so" (Bone, "Romantic Irony Revisited" 244). Byron's Romantic irony creates and reinforces ambiguity instead of resolving it. Rather than allowing the comical, ironic aspects to gain precedence, he uses Romantic irony to bring about a "hospitable coexistence" of high and low, gloomy and cheerful, pathos and bathos, idealism and disillusionment (Hopps 147; also see Stabler, "Byron, Postmodernism and Intertextuality" 270). The two other possible interpretations of the interplay between poem and notes in *The Giaour* both draw on this notion that two contradictory attitudes can coexist without cancelling each other. However, the two interpretations come to diametrically opposed conclusions.

The second possible reading relates to Stabler's observation that such juxtapositions were seen by some as the pinnacle of insincerity: "Byron's contemporary readers felt that by mingling sentiment and satire, his texts undermined the possibility of sincerity altogether" (Stabler, "Byron, Postmodernism and

made in order to better allow readers to first read the poem in its entirety and to pay attention to the annotations only in a second reading.

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Intertextuality" 281; also see Stabler, *Byron, Poetics and History* 18–42). In this case, the tonal inconsistencies created through the interplay of poem and notes in *The Giaour* would show that the 'real' Byron is to be found neither in the main text nor in the paratext; they are merely the entirely fictional productions of a capricious writer who playfully refused to observe decorum. According to this interpretation, the feelings and opinions expressed in the interpolations and notes only belong to the fictional European 'editor' himself, and Byron's own attitudes remain entirely hidden from readers. There is no sincerity or self-revelation to be found in *The Giaour*, only fiction. In this second case, rather than misunderstanding the tale he is editing, the fictional European traveller would be presented as being ambivalent towards it. The gloominess of his poetic interpolations and the merriment of his notes do not cancel out or overpower each other but coexist. The attitudinal and tonal ambiguities that arise from this interplay between poem and notes would thus complement the moral and cultural ambiguities that pervade the poem. The poem itself constantly raises questions which it then refuses to answer: is the Giaour a righteous avenger or – as several of the Muslim characters perceive him – a villain? Is he a Muslim or a Christian or neither? Is he a representative of the West or the East or of neither? While the notes – according to this second interpretation – do not tell us anything about Byron's own feelings, they add to these uncertainties, ridiculing Muslim and Christian characters alike, and inducing readers to wonder whether the Levantine story-teller's narrative is a deeply moving tale, melodramatic trash, or, perhaps, a bit of both. According to this interpretation, the notes are, in brief, entirely concerned with their intratextual function (how do they influence the meaning of the poem?) rather than their socio-pragmatic function (what do they tell us about Byron himself?).

The third option points in the opposite direction of what has been suggested about the insincerity of Romantic irony. In this third case, it is only *through* (self-)contradiction that Byron can be sincere and that he can fully grasp the complexity of the world and his attitudes towards it. After all, "if a writer should be quite consistent, / How could he possibly show things existent?" (*Don Juan* 15.87). Or, as Byron's friend Thomas Moore wrote to Lady Donegal after Waterloo: "Tragedy and farce come so mixed up together, that to do justice to the world, we ought to be like the grimacier at Astley's, and cry at one side of the face while we laugh with the other" (T. Moore, *Letters* 1: 366). By supplementing a poem which treats topics like religion, despair, and death seriously with annotations which make light of them, Byron might have attempted to show that he sees tragical and comical elements in all of these concepts – just as *Don Juan* insists on both the tragic and the comic aspects of

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shipwrecks and sieges. Hopps's suggestion that, in *Don Juan*, Byron's Romantic irony "set[s] one perspective alongside another, allowing them to relativize each other's claims, but nonetheless allowing both to stand" may be true for *The Giaour* as well (Hopps 140). The work can be seen as striving to offer a more balanced and complete view of the world than an entirely gloomy or an entirely humorous work could provide. The serious always entails the comic; the two are inextricably connected, and only a text depicting both can do justice to reality. It should nevertheless be noted that – as opposed to *Don Juan* where this juxtaposition occurs in the poem itself – *The Giaour* still tilts to one side, though it is not entirely clear which one this is: the solemnity of the main text or (since they serve as an 'authoritative' comment on the poem) the facetiousness of the notes?

The ambivalence that may be found in *The Giaour* is, of course, not restricted to the work's outlook on the world: readers could also interpret the interplay between the poem and the annotations as Byron hinting at his ambivalence towards his own style and subject matter. By writing a serious poem with humorous annotations, he could have his cake and eat it too: he could compose a work in the bombastic 'Byronic' mode and still show that he was aware of, and somewhat amused by, its pathos. As stated above, this need not suggest (as has sometimes been contended) that Byron regarded his oriental tales as half-hearted, ridiculous trash which he only wrote because he suspected that poems of this kind would sell well (for this argument, see Martin 30–63). Instead, the tonal inconsistencies in *The Giaour* can be seen as an acknowledgement that it is just as alluring, honest, and artistically ambitious to write about passionate, idealised love and the heights of despair and regret as it is to make fun of them.

What is more, readers could interpret these inconsistencies as suggesting that Byron was not only someone eager to *depict* both the lofty and the ludicrous aspects of existence, but that he was also someone who deeply *felt* them. In other words, *The Giaour* suggests that its contradictoriness is not only necessitated by the world which it strives to describe but that it is also a natural result of its author's character and sentiments.

The idea that self-contradiction may be the highest form of sincerity was – as Stabler has shown – not prevalent at the time when *The Giaour* was published. Neither was the sense that Byron of all people would be someone to entertain such a notion.[92] (As stated earlier, most passages in *CHP* that might have created this impression had been left out in the published version.) However,

92 Byron himself, however, privately stressed the sincerity of self-contradiction as early as in 1813/1814. Regarding the journal he kept during this time, he commented: "God knows

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the publication of *Don Juan* from 1819 onwards and especially of its sixteenth canto (1824) retrospectively shed light on *The Giaour* by suggesting that self-contradiction and (self-)ambivalence were indeed the most characteristic features of the 'real' Byron. In the sixteenth canto of *Don Juan*, Byron famously introduces the concept of 'mobility'. Describing Lady Adeline Amundeville, the narrator muses that

> [s]o well she acted, all and every part
> By turns – with that vivacious versatility,
> Which many people take for want of heart.
> They err – 'tis merely what is called mobility,
> A thing of temperament and not of art,
> Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
> And false – though true; for surely they're sincerest,
> Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest. (*Don Juan* 16.97)

Byron's annotation on this stanza further explains that mobility "may be defined as an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions – at the same time without *losing* the past" (*Don Juan* 16.97n; *CPW* 5: 769, original emphasis). Those who are characterised by mobility are fully aware that they are contradicting their own past feelings, opinions, and actions, but they cannot help but doing so. While Romantic irony may be seen as a deliberately chosen philosophical outlook and artistic method, mobility is here presented as inherent and instinctive. The end of this annotation, which asserts that this is "a most painful and unhappy attribute", as well as information by and about Byron published after his death,[93] suggested to readers that mobility was one of his own

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what contradictions it may contain. If I am sincere with myself […] every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor" (*BLJ* 3: 233).

93 In his biography of Byron (1830–31), his friend Thomas Moore comments on this passage in *Don Juan*, arguing that Byron "was fully aware not only of the abundance of this quality in his own nature, but of the danger in which it placed consistency and singleness of character" (T. Moore, *Lord Byron* 2: 787). Slightly earlier in the biography, he explains that Byron was governed "at different moments by totally different passions" (2: 782) and that "[s]o various, indeed, and contradictory were his attributes, both moral and intellectual, that he may be pronounced to have been not one, but many" (2: 783). Likewise, he comments on Byron's "readiness in reflecting all hues, whether of the shadows or of the lights of our variegated existence" (2: 795) and on the "unexampled versatility of his powers and feelings, and the facility with which he gave way to the impulses of both" (2: 795). For a more detailed discussion of Moore's account of Byron's role-playing, mobility and apparent insincerity, see Vail 169–76.

Moore's account of Byron's character chimes in with a famous stanza in the posthumously published seventeenth canto of *Don Juan*. The narrator (who is, in this case, strongly implied to be identical with Byron) reflects: "Temperate I am – yet never had a

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defining character traits. Is this, then, finally the retrospective confirmation that, in *The Giaour*, readers can find the sincere, 'actual' Byron neither exclusively in the serious poem nor exclusively in the comical notes but in their contradictory interplay? The confirmation that *The Giaour* indeed allows them a candid, though necessarily inconsistent, glimpse at the character and feelings of the author?

Though this appears to be a plausible explanation in the light of his œuvre as a whole, Byron would not be Byron if he did not cast some doubt on this solution as well. Despite insisting that people who are characterised by mobility are "sincerest", the passage in *Don Juan* raises questions. As McGann points out, the two preceding stanzas – describing Adeline's electioneering for her husband – insinuate that mobility depends just as much on one's "social formation" as on one's psychology, being partly an acquired skill rather than an inherent disposition (McGann, "Byron, Mobility, and the Poetics of Historical Ventriloquism" 70).[94] What is more, it is suggested that mobility may not be so sincere after all: Adeline is depicted as "playing her grand role, / Which she went through as though it were a dance, / (Betraying only now and then her soul[)]" (*Don Juan* 16.96), and mobility is declared to be "false – though true". This is also stressed by Angela Esterhammer, who argues that Byron's depiction of Adeline "reveals discomfort at the idea that emotion, if so mobile, might be *merely* skin deep" (Esterhammer 112, original emphasis). In other words, the stanzas raise the question whether the outward signs of mobility indeed always correspond to an "internal psychological state" (Esterhammer 112). Instead of embodying sincerely felt conflicting emotions and attitudes, mobility might, after all, only be capricious role-playing which is meant to hide one's

temper; / Modest I am – yet with some slight assurance; / Changeable too – yet somehow *'Idem semper'*: / Patient – but not enamoured of endurance; / Cheerful – but, sometimes, rather apt to whimper: / Mild – but at times a sort of *'Hercules furens'*: / So that I almost think that the same skin / For one without – has two or three within" (*Don Juan* 17.11, original emphasis).

94 McGann also notes that, from a political standpoint, mobility is dangerously close to treachery and opportunism – calling special attention to Byron's comments on Robert Southey in *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment* (cf. McGann, "Byron, Mobility, and the Poetics of Historical Ventriloquism" 72). To this, one may add that the narrator of *Don Juan* (who may, in this particular passage, be read as Byron's alter ego) ascribes a similar political mobility to himself, (facetiously?) arguing that he "was born for opposition" and that he would immediately change his political allegiances if the party he supported came into power (*Don Juan* 15.22): if the current monarchist powers fell, he would first "deride their tumble" and then "turn the other way, / And wax an Ultra-royalist in loyalty, / Because I hate even democratic royalty" (15.23). While Southey's political mobility impelled him to go the 'safer' way from Jacobin to royalist Poet Laureate, the narrator's (and Byron's) would allegedly lead them to whatever is most dangerous and rebellious.

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real feelings.[95] Thus, rather than disambiguating *The Giaour*, Byron's description of mobility in *Don Juan* again problematises readers' search for the 'real' author in his oriental tale.

The discussion of Byron's facetious annotations in *The Giaour* shows how contradictory images of the 'real' author can be traced through different stages, each of which presents the work in a different context.[96] One context is how Byron's contemporaries went about reading *The Giaour*, i.e. whether or not they perused the notes in a first reading. Read without the annotations, *The Giaour* does not give any hints (apart from the similarity between the Giaour and the narrator as well as the protagonist of *CHP*) that the poem could be read as autobiographical self-revelation on the part of Byron. Given that, by 1813, certain emotions were recognised as typically Byronic, however, some readers might have been induced to believe that specific passages (supposedly spoken by an unidentifiable narrator and later pronounced to be 'interpolations') express his own gloomy feelings. A reading which also takes into account the annotations needs to qualify this impression and negotiate how the facetiousness of the notes can be reconciled with the melancholy of the poem. Furthermore, due to its position in the work, the last annotation – claiming that *The Giaour* is mainly an overheard authentic Turkish tale and that the interpolations and notes are written by a European traveller (who may or may not be identified with Byron himself) – can only inform a later reading; the editorial fiction is not apparent in a first perusal.

Read in the light of *CHP* I–II, *The Giaour* on the one hand seems to confirm the identity of Byron and his 'Byronic' heroes and narrators that some readers had suspected from 1812 onwards. On the other hand, both of these works feature the introduction of comical elements into a largely serious text. Readers may either ignore these instances of facetiousness as irrelevant lapses of decorum *or* regard the tonal inconstancies as characteristic of Byron which have to be accounted for in an interpretation both of his œuvre and his character. Byron's later oriental tales and *Manfred* – which do not include any humorous notes[97] – suggested that readers should opt for the former. *Don Juan* and espe-

95 Furthermore, rather than expressing ambivalence (i.e. the co-presence of conflicting attitudes), mobility might just as well indicate a simple move from one unambivalent attitude to the next one.

96 Of course, the matter is rendered even more complicated by the fact that Byron kept adding to *The Giaour* over several months after its first publication, with the result that there are seven different published versions of the poem. The extremely complex composition and publication history of *The Giaour* is traced in *CPW* 3: 406–13.

97 This might have been a reaction to reviewers' hostile responses to the notes in *The Giaour* or an attempt to write works that were more consistent with what readers at that time

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cially its pronouncements on mobility, however, partly hinted at the latter, as did information published about Byron after his death. The question of where, if anywhere, the 'real' Byron could be found in *The Giaour*, thus, was not only rendered more complicated by the work itself but also by the likewise contradictory, half-revelatory, teasing pieces of information that readers had received and continued to receive elsewhere.

V. What Was Left Unsaid: Another Case of Posthumous Dis- and Re-Ambiguation

As in the case of *CHP*, what did *not* find its way into the published version of *The Giaour* is just as intriguing as what did. Byron had originally planned to add a note to a later edition of *The Giaour* that would have had wide-reaching consequences for readers' assessment of the potential autobiographical nature of the poem. For this annotation, Byron asked Lord Sligo (who had stayed in Athens at the same time as himself) to write a letter in which he recorded the rumours about Byron saving a woman from suffering the same fate as Leila in *The Giaour*.[98] The anecdote suggests that Byron witnessed a similar incident as the one which he describes in the poem, though with a happier ending. As he did with his first-hand experience of the Albanians' belief in second-hearing, Byron seems to have taken a more or less fortunate event and transformed it into something much darker for his poem. The acknowledgment that the poem is based on facts thus also serves to highlight how much it *differs* from these facts. Like the note on second-hearing, the planned annotation both reinforces and subverts the autobiographical aspects of *The Giaour*.

What is more, Byron's projected annotation also tantalisingly raises questions regarding the accuracy of Sligo's account and argues that it is "not requisite for me to subjoin either assent or contradiction" (*CPW* 3: 423). Like the note on the facial expression of corpses, this annotation insinuates that it veils more information than it discloses. Far from answering questions, it raises new ones – adding yet another element to Byron's constant game of hide-and-seek with his readers.

Without anticipating chapter 3.2.2 too much (which is concerned with notes that make use of the fact that different groups of readers possess different

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would recognise as 'Byronic', i.e. full of grandeur, gloom, and disillusionment. It was only in *Don Juan* that Byron re-introduced the combination of the serious and the comical. Instances of self-subversion through self-annotation can, however, also be found earlier than in *The Giaour*. Apart from being included in *CHP*, they also occur in "Lachin Y Gair" (see chapter 3.4.1) and *The Waltz* (see chapter 3.3.3).

98 The letter is reprinted in *CPW* 3: 414. It was also reprinted in Moore's biography of Byron, who, however, omitted Byron's drafted annotation which questions the accuracy of Sligo's account (cf. T. Moore, *Lord Byron* 1: 289–90).

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pieces of background knowledge on certain topics), it needs to be added that, though the annotation remained unpublished during Byron's lifetime, Sligo's account was known to a handful of readers.[99] As Tom Mole explains, Byron circulated Sligo's letter "among his acquaintance in 1813, with ten lines inked out so heavily as to have torn the paper" (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 63).[100] Byron claimed that the censored lines only contained "some uncouth Turkish patronymics – and some circumstances amusing enough but neither singular nor edifying", though his correspondents probably knew him well enough to suspect that his personal involvement in the incident was not limited to him *saving* the woman (*BLJ* 3: 156). Even with his friends, thus, Byron resorted to playful and provocative half-revelations rather than straightforward disclosures.

When Thomas Medwin's *Conversations of Lord Byron* were published in 1824, all readers could eventually discover the full story that had (allegedly) inspired *The Giaour*.[101] According to Medwin, Byron explained to him that a woman had been ordered to be drowned because of their affair, that he had been deeply in love with her, and that she died soon after being saved by him, "of a fever – perhaps of love" (Medwin 86). This, though not as terrible as Leila's death in *The Giaour*, is nevertheless a far cry from the happy ending of Sligo's letter. On the one hand, the story can be read as a final confirmation of the verisimilitude of the poem, of the fact that Byron had more in common with the Giaour than he had hitherto admitted. On the other hand, not even this melancholy disclosure can explain away the facetiousness with which Byron often treats his narrative in the notes to the poem. After years of suggesting and denying that he could be equated with his heroes, Medwin's posthumous revelation

99 These readers were: John Galt, Lord Holland, Matthew Lewis, Thomas Moore, Samuel Rogers, Lady Melbourne, and Edward Daniel Clarke (cf. *BLJ* 3: 200; 3: 230).

100 It appears from Byron's correspondence that he initially wanted to use the letter to counter the rumours that his ex-lover Lady Caroline Lamb spread about his adventures in the Ottoman empire (cf. *BLJ* 3: 102; 3: 155–56). Neither the exact content of these rumours, nor the number of people who heard about them can be reconstructed. I could not find a review of *The Giaour* that refers to the rumours; it is uncertain how well-known they were beyond Lamb's private circle.

101 Medwin is usually rather unreliable. Thomas Moore, one of Byron's closest friends, for example, argued that his book on Byron's conversations was "full of gross errors" (T. Moore, *Journal of Thomas Moore* 2: 772). In this case, however, his account is more or less substantiated by Byron's personal correspondence and journal entries.

William St. Clair contends that Byron deliberately hoaxed Medwin during their conversations, whereas Doris Langley Moore points out that Medwin seems to have been simply careless and stupid, and that neither he nor Byron appear to have been particularly sober during their talks (cf. St. Clair, "Byron's Bamming and Humming" 43–45; D. L.-L. Moore, *The Late Lord Byron* 96–98).

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about Byron does not resolve any of the ambiguities that surround the autobiographical nature of his works – it only heaps a new contradiction on older ones. Byron continued (and still continues) to 'quiz' readers from the grave.

3.2.1.3 *Don Juan*: Half-Revelations and Pseudo-Privacy

The personal notes discussed so far were concerned with relating anecdotes that have a direct and obvious connection to the respective annotated passage. This cannot be said of all of Byron's anecdotal self-annotations. Some of them digress so far from the poems that they lose any relation to passage, plot, or character and instead become exclusively preoccupied with the author himself. It would be easy to dismiss such notes as self-centred and irrelevant, but they deserve critical attention as being characteristic of Byron and as contributing a great deal to the appeal of his works. In their "conversational facility" (*Don Juan* 15.20), these annotations create a sense of immediacy and intimacy, of sitting at Byron's table and listening to his amusing and scandalous reminiscences. In what follows, I will both elaborate on how exactly this sense is achieved in *Don Juan* and on how it is, again, undermined. For the latter, two aspects are of special importance: (1) the constant reminders that both *Don Juan* and its notes conceal more than they reveal, and (2) the fact that the anecdotal annotations create an impression of privacy while relying on readers' knowledge that such privacy was an illusion – both in public and in 'personal' writing. In other words, even if Byron's self-revelation in these anecdotal annotations was meant to be completely sincere, this sincerity has to be communicated in some way, which means that it "enters the realm of […] socially determined codes and conventions" (Esterhammer 101–02). Or, as James Treadwell puts it (discussing *CHP* III rather than *Don Juan*): Byron

> performs an autobiography which speaks the language of authentic personal consciousness while also conducting its transactions with the public sphere: the autobiography of an exile writing home, where privacy happens in public, where the very identification of the first-person subject of the text as the inward self of the author is inseparable from that subject's negotiations with the conditions of being printed. (Treadwell 195)

The awareness that there is an audience to which one's sincerity has to be conveyed thus endangers this very sincerity.

Self-Revelation as a Reminder of Self-Concealment

Examples of digressive anecdotal notes can be found quite early in Byron's career. For instance, in the annotations on *The Bride of Abydos*, he briefly addresses an issue mentioned in the poem (confirming that Turkish scimitars

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usually are decorated with a quote from the Quran), before proceeding to tell readers in great detail about a scimitar in his personal collection, its peculiarities, and how he came by it (cf. *Bride of Abydos* 2.189n; *CPW* 3: 440). However, the biggest mine of digressive anecdotal annotations is, unsurprisingly, *Don Juan* – especially from the fourth canto (1821) onwards. While the poem itself contains many (however thinly) *fictionalised* glimpses at Byron's life (Donna Inez, the English cantos, etc.), its annotations present a scattered array of anecdotes that seem to be *directly* drawn from the poet's past. In them, Byron remembers how he once witnessed someone nearly die of a burst vein (*Don Juan* 4.58n; *CPW* 5: 704); he relates how he heard a singer in Venice who had earlier been kidnapped and sold as a slave in Algiers (4.80n; *CPW* 5: 704); and he shares stories about himself drinking too much raki (5.53n; *CPW* 5: 708), a scary childhood memory (10.18n; *CPW* 5: 743), him meeting his relatives, the Birons of France (10.58n; *CPW* 5: 745), and the day on which he learnt of the existence of 'drapery misses' (11.49n; *CPW* 5: 749).[102] The annotation I will focus on here is appended to a passage that describes how Juan, upon his arrival in London, "drove past some Hotels, / St. James's Palace, and St. James's 'Hells'" (*Don Juan* 11.29). It explains:

> 'Hells,' gaming-houses. What their number may now be, in this life, I know not. Before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both 'gold' and 'silver.' I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance, because when he asked me where I thought that his soul would be found hereafter, I answered, 'In Silver Hell'. (11.29n; *CPW* 5: 748)

Though the very beginning of the annotation provides an explanation that is still closely connected to the poem, it does not dispel the impression that

102 Byron's most conceited and irrelevant (with respect to the annotated passage) anecdotal note was never published; it only appears in the manuscript of *Don Juan*. Annotating the passage where Juan is forced to kiss the sultana Gulbeyaz's "*thorough-bred*" fingers, he explains that "[t]here is perhaps nothing more distinctive of birth than the hand – it is almost the only sign of blood which Aristocracy can generate. – I remember a Pacha's remarking that he knew that a certain Englishman was *nobly born* – because 'he had *small ears – small hands & curling silky hair*'" (*Don Juan* 5.106n; *CPW* 5: 709, original emphasis). The "certain Englishman" was, of course, Byron himself, and the Pacha was Ali Pacha, whom he had met in 1809. The Pacha's compliment made a great impression on the young Byron, who mentions it four times in his letters from Albania – twice to his mother (cf. *BLJ* 1: 227; 1: 249), to his schoolfriend Henry Drury (cf. *BLJ* 1: 238), and to his Cambridge friend Francis Hodgson (cf. *BLJ* 1: 254). The note in *Don Juan* shows that he remembered it even more than a decade later. In the published version, Byron only printed the first sentence of the annotation. Maybe he eventually realised that the fact that an old Albanian warlord had flirted with him was nothing to boast of.

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the reference to 'hells' was mainly introduced to give Byron the opportunity to brag about his wild youth. By the time when this canto was published, the slang term 'hell' seems to have been fairly familiar to readers,[103] and it was common knowledge among contemporaries that these establishments were mainly found in the vicinity of St. James's (cf. Rendell 177). Besides, the annotation seems to presuppose that readers are sufficiently versed in gambling terminology to understand the difference between 'gold hells' and 'silver hells' without further explanation.[104] In other words, by translating the word 'hell', the note tells readers something that they in all likelihood already knew or could at least infer from the context.

The note can hence hardly be called explanatory. Furthermore, unlike the other anecdotal annotations discussed earlier in this chapter, this one is completely detached from what is being described in the annotated passage. The notes analysed above establish (but then also sometimes call into question) a connection between Byron and his protagonists or narrators: whatever they are doing or witnessing has allegedly also been done or witnessed by Byron. In the present passage, however, neither the protagonist nor the narrator enter a gambling den themselves. They do not come close to fighting a duel, either.[105] The annotation does not tell us anything about the poem, only about its author.

In doing so, the note serves a rather paradoxical function: on the one hand, it suggests that readers can indeed use Byron's works to learn something about the 'real' author. The note gives them the impression that they are witnessing the actual Byron writing "exactly as [he]'d talk / With any body in a ride or walk" and garrulously revealing entertaining details about his life (*Don Juan* 15.19). Apart from catering to readers' interest in gossip about himself, Byron here presents himself as a typical upper-class rake, who – unlike his enemies of the Lake School – is primarily a man of the world rather than a poet. By creating the impression that Byron is directly chatting with his readers and letting them into his secrets, the annotation indeed evokes a feeling of intimacy between author and audience as described by Tom Mole (see above). Furthermore, as opposed to many of the passages in *CHP* and *The Giaour* discussed above, there

103 The first use of "hell" in this sense that I could find occurs in Theophilus Swift's *The Gamblers, a Poem* (1777). In 1809, the article "Notorious Gamblers" in the *Satirist, or Monthly Meteor* (vol. 4) remarks that a "Mr. Trist […] attended regularly at all the *Hells*" without providing an explanation of the word, which suggests that its meaning was sufficiently known to readers by this time ("Notorious Gamblers" 154, original emphasis). The first mention recorded in the *OED* is from 1812 (cf. "hell, *n.* and *int.*" def. A.8.).

104 In the passage in his "Detached Thoughts", on which this annotation is based, Byron explains that 'silver hell' is "a cant name for a second rate Gambling house" (*BLJ* 9: 19).

105 The narrator, however, muses on the feeling one has right before a duel in *Don Juan* 4.41.

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is no harsh tonal contrast between poem and note, no insinuation that Byron might use the note to destabilise any notions about his experiences, character, or opinions that the poem built up. The talkative, amused, and detached tone of nostalgia that reigns throughout the note is not at all different from the tone of the stanzas preceding and succeeding it.

On the other hand, a jarring juxtaposition of different moods and attitudes occurs within *Don Juan* as a whole, of course. By the eleventh canto, readers have encountered a large number of passages that complicate the notion of a sincere, unified, and complete Byronic 'essence' that could somehow be inscribed into the poem or paratext. They have witnessed him (or, rather, the narrator who may or may not be identified with Byron) describe a shipwreck in the most solemn and in the most callously comical way; they have heard him melancholically lament the Khan and his sons' deaths during the siege of Ismail and later facetiously relate the middle-aged widows' indignant question "[w]herefore the ravishing did not begin!'" (*Don Juan* 8.182); they have read enthusiastic musings on posthumous fame and the immediate ridicule of this notion (3.88–92). Even if readers assumed that all of these contradictory attitudes converge to form at least an approximation of the 'real' Byron's complex feelings and opinions, this would mean that each passage taken for itself only allows for an extremely limited insight into the author. Thus, even if they believed that the 'hells' passage and note give them a glimpse at the worldly, daring, cheerful Byron, they would have been aware that this could only ever be one facet of him, never the full picture.

Furthermore – like many of the personal notes in *CHP* and *The Giaour* –, while the annotation indeed suggests that it allows readers a glimpse at Byron's past, it also implicitly draws attention to all the things that *Don Juan* does *not* reveal.[106] For one, readers never learn the name of Byron's acquaintance who almost challenged him to a duel – foregrounding that *Don Juan* will at best be able to furnish them with partial revelations. Furthermore, since the note relates an anecdote that is not mentioned in the main text at all, it reminds readers that, even though the poem offers some hints about Byron's past, these hints are incomplete and carefully selected.[107] Despite its occasional exhi-

106 Gary Dyer makes a similar argument about Byron's use of foreign and slang languages in *Don Juan*: "Even when Byron uses Latin, French, or the dialect of the Fancy to refer to innocuous or uncontroversial things, his constant reliance on these languages points to the need to disguise his meanings on other subjects" (Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 574).

107 In his "Detached Thoughts" (see below), Byron likewise tantalises readers with the shocking confessions that he withholds from them: "If I could explain at length the *real* causes which have contributed to increase this perhaps *natural* temperament of mine – this

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bitionism, *Don Juan* conceals more than it reveals. This is also shown in the curious choices of what is annotated in the first place. The passage about Don Juan driving past 'hells' contains no autobiographical allusion and requires no explanation but nevertheless receives an autobiographical note. By contrast, the lines "I have a passion for the name of 'Mary,' / For once it was a magic sound to me" (*Don Juan* 5.4; alluding to Byron's childhood love Mary Chaworth) are teasingly and ostentatiously autobiographical. They call for an explanation but remain unannotated. Then, there are also cases in which annotations for seemingly autobiographical passages raise more questions than they answer. Take, for instance, the lines "My days of love are over, me no more / The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow / Can make the fool of which they made before" (*Don Juan* 1.216). The annotation on them merely quotes (in Latin) Horace's *Odes* 4.1.29–32, which is concerned with the speaker's loss of interest in both women and male youths. Readers who understood the Latin note had to ask themselves (1) whether the lines in Byron's poem might simply be a joking reference to literary tradition rather than an expression of his genuine feelings, and (2) why exactly he chose to quote an explicit reference to bisexuality even though the annotated passage only mentions women.[108] The mystifying, half-revelatory, or downright missing annotations in *Don Juan* chime in with instances in which the poem itself draws attention to all the things it cannot say. For example, references to the suicide of Sir Samuel Romilly (*Don Juan* 1.15) and to syphilis (1.129–31) were replaced by lines of asterisks.[109] *Don Juan* does not simply omit information – it draws attention to the omission. It gives away just enough to incite readers' interest but never enough to satisfy it.

Melancholy which hath made me a bye-word – nobody would wonder – – but this is impossible without doing much mischief. […] I must not go on with these reflections – or I shall be letting out some secret or other – to paralyze posterity" (*BLJ* 9: 38, original emphasis). Byron's remarks on his *Memoirs* (which were burnt by his friends after his death) also constantly refer to all the things that he dared not include in them (cf. *BLJ* 6: 59; 6: 236; 7: 244; 9: 38; 9: 172).

108 In the manuscript, Byron had left out the reference to young men when quoting Horace's lines. Hobhouse – torn between moral squeamishness and scholarly correctness – told him to "add the whole or scratch out all after *femina*". Byron replied: "Quote the whole then – it was only in compliance with your Settentrionale [northern] notions that I left out the remnant of the line" (*CPW* 5: 681).

109 The decision to substitute asterisks for these lines was Murray's rather than Byron's. The restored lines were only published after Byron's death.

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The Anecdotal Annotation between Byron's "Detached Thoughts" and Spence's Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men

Byron's note on 'hells' subverts the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation, which prescribe that a note should directly address a question raised by the annotated passage. One may even argue that Byron's self-absorbed comment is an annotation in form only and that, in reality, it inscribes itself into a variety of other discourse traditions, all of which are concerned with life-writing. As will be shown, the four models on which this annotation is based – Byron's "Detached Thoughts", Joseph Spence's *Observations*, table-talk, and 'private' journals designed for posthumous publication – are themselves ambiguous, being simultaneously private and public, conversational and written. As a consequence, the note is rendered ambiguous with respect to its discourse tradition (annotation vs. memoir), its 'medial form' (spoken vs. written), and its (im)mediacy (Byron privately noting down his memories and thoughts for himself vs. Byron putting on a show for his readers). The annotation gives readers the impression that they are allowed to hear the 'real' Byron candidly chatting about his past, while at the same time reminding them of the constructedness of this impression. The sense of unmediated, sincere self-revelation is both created and undermined.

The most immediate model for this annotation in *Don Juan* can be found in Byron's "Detached Thoughts". Byron recorded the "Detached Thoughts" in his private journal, starting in October 1821 and concluding in May 1822. (The eleventh canto of *Don Juan* itself was written slightly later, between 6 and 17 October 1822; cf. *CPW* 5: 746.) Byron's "Detached Thoughts" are a chaotic hotchpotch of entertaining autobiographical reminiscences; opinions on various literary, political, and philosophical issues; anecdotes about, and judgments on, Byron's contemporaries; as well as second-hand gossip. In one of his "Detached Thoughts", Byron reminisces:

> Captain Wallace a notorious character of that day – and *then* intimate with most of the more dissipated young men of the day – asked me one night at the Gaming table where I thought *his Soul* would be found after death? I answered him – 'in *Silver Hell*' (a cant name for a second rate Gambling house) – – (*BLJ* 9: 19, original emphasis)[110]

110 It is probable that Byron's acquaintance was William Wallace, later author of *Memoirs of William Wallace, Esq. Late of His Majesty's 15th Hussars* (1821). The rather sentimental and moralising book recounts how the author spent his youth in gambling dens among high-society rakes and how he was eventually imprisoned for his debts. It is not recorded whether Byron knew the work.

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This privately recorded version of the anecdote is almost identical with Byron's published annotation, but it also provides the name of Byron's acquaintance and explains what a 'silver hell' is. One may, of course, wonder why Byron explains the latter in his own journal – he certainly did not have to translate the slang term for himself. This has to do with the fact that the "Detached Thoughts" were not so private after all. When he sent them to Murray, Byron explained that they "may serve *partly* hereafter – in aid of the Memoirs", and Thomas Moore indeed made ample use of them in his 1830/1831 biography of Byron (*BLJ* 9: 168, original emphasis). As Stephen Cheeke has pointed out, the "Detached Thoughts" were only one of several "memorial projects" that Byron undertook between 1821 and 1823: he composed the 'English cantos' of *Don Juan*, made negotiations with Murray to publish his *Memoirs* (begun in 1818), and gave his friends directions for publishing his letters after his death (Cheeke 157; cf. *BLJ* 8: 226–28). Byron's anecdotal annotations can be seen as yet another "memorial project", giving readers a sneak peek at the revelations that would await them in his *Memoirs* and correspondence.[111] Such autobiographical undertakings do, of course, not come as a surprise in a successful author – especially one as concerned about the unpredictable vagaries of posthumous fame[112] and as interested in anecdotes and gossip of earlier times as Byron.[113]

111 The *Memoirs* were destroyed shortly after Byron's death (against his own wishes and despite the protests of Moore). For more information on them, see D. L.-L. Moore, *The Late Lord Byron* 12–56 and Cochran, *The Burning of Byron's Memoirs* 1–17.

112 See, for instance, his remarks on what unfavourable (or too honest) biographers did to the reputation of great men (cf. *Don Juan* 3.91–92) and his poem "Churchill's Grave", which ponders on both the posthumous neglect and fame of an author who was highly successful among contemporaries. It must also be kept in mind that, in the same year as he began writing his "Detached Thoughts", Byron was deeply involved in the Pope-Bowles controversy, witnessing one of the most celebrated poets of the previous century and his personal idol falling out of favour with parts of posterity. On a grander scale, Byron also tried to assess what future generations would think of Waterloo – guessing (quite correctly) that "it will be like the battle of Zama, where we think of Hannibal more than Scipio", i.e. remembered for Napoleon's defeat rather than Wellington and Blücher's victory (*CHP* 4.181n; *CPW* 2: 340).

113 For example, he told Lady Melbourne that he "would give the world to pass a month with Sheridan or any lady or gentleman of the old school – & hear them talk every day & all day of themselves & acquaintance – & all they have heard & seen in their lives" (*BLJ* 3: 129). Fuelled by his "awareness of having lived in a particular world (that of early Regency London) which had passed into history", Byron apparently tried to provide future generations with as much gossip and amusing information about the early nineteenth century as he would have liked to hear about the eighteenth (Cheeke 157; also see 182–83).

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These memorial projects were not only fuelled by Byron's wish to influence how posterity would perceive him and his age but were also indebted to various contemporary forms of life-writing.[114] One such form consisted in collecting and publishing anecdotes – sometimes about a single person, sometimes about a specific topic or time span.[115] Yet, Byron's digressive autobiographical annotations and his gossipy, unorganised "Detached Thoughts" differ greatly from the anecdotes in the printed collections that he owned, which rather resemble lengthy and surprisingly dry encyclopaedia entries.[116] There is, however, one important exception to this: Joseph Spence's *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men*, compiled in the mid-eighteenth century but first published in 1820. The book was definitely known to Byron: in January 1821, he recorded in his journal: "Read Spence's Anecdotes. Pope a fine fellow – always thought him so" (*BLJ* 8: 14). Spence (1699–1768) was a personal acquaintance of Pope, and the anecdotes related in his book are for the most part drawn from his conversations with the poet (some also come from other contemporaries). Spence's *Observations* are, hence, an example of table-talk, i.e. a "form of literary biography which consists of a person's sayings, opinions, obiter dicta, aperçus, etc. These are recorded by the person to whom they are addressed" (Cuddon 708).[117] The opinions and anecdotes noted down by Spence are short and amusing. Similar to Byron's "Detached Thoughts", they provide a glimpse at Pope's and his contemporaries' views on various subjects as well as at their assessments and memories of other notable figures of the age.[118] As in Byron's

114 Volume four of *The Oxford History of Life-Writing*, which will cover the Romantic age, has unfortunately not been published yet.

115 The Romantic interest in anecdotes can be seen, for example, in Thomas Moore's posthumously published journal, in which he recorded many first-, second- and third-hand accounts of amusing incidents and bon mots.

116 Among others, he owned John Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* and Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature* as well as the latter's *Calamities of Authors* and *Quarrels of Authors* (cf. *CMP* 234; 240).

117 The fashion for recording table-talk stems from the seventeenth century (cf. Cuddon 708). Byron's own table-talk has been published by a multitude of contemporaries; it is also collected in Ernest J. Lovell's *His Very Self and Voice*. Lovell notes that the reliability of many of these accounts is highly contested.

118 Three examples may suffice to give an idea of the nature of Spence's *Observations*: Pope is recorded saying: "Sir John Suckling was an immoral man, as well as debauched. The story of the French cards (his getting certain marks affixed to all that came from the great makers in France) was told me by the late Duke of Buckingham, and he had it from old Lady Dorset herself" (Spence 89). According to the *Observations*, Pope also reflected on the "terrible moments" one feels "after one has engaged for a large work! In the beginning of my translating the Iliad, I wished any body would hang me a hundred times" (Spence 28). And, lastly, his opinion of Elijah Fenton: "Fenton is a right honest man. He is

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collection, the conversational, even gossipy nature of Spence's book is often clearly noticeable. Furthermore, like the "Detached Thoughts", Spence's anecdotes are quite disconnected from one another, which gives the book a rather unpredictable quality.[119] Despite the brevity of this comparison, it hopefully becomes apparent how deeply Byron's own attempt at capturing the spirit of his age in the "Detached Thoughts" was indebted to Spence's *Observations*. One may even go so far as to speculate that his reading of Spence incited him to note down the "Detached Thoughts" in the first place.

Reading Byron's note on 'hells' against the backdrop of Spence's book helps highlighting why it is ambiguous with respect to its 'media form'. It is based on the written "Detached Thoughts", which are themselves inspired by Spence's *Observations* – the printed record of spoken dialogue. Like so many other passages in *Don Juan*, this note has a conversational directness to it, while its typographical presentation as an endnote still draws attention to the fact that it appears in print.[120] Furthermore, it presents itself as table-talk with the middleman cut out: while table-talk is usually noted down by someone other than the speaker, Byron here straightforwardly records his own joke. On the one hand, this creates a higher sense of immediacy and reliability – there is no second person involved who might misremember or deliberately misconstrue the author's words. On the other hand, it exhibits a certain showmanship and destroys one of the illusions of table-talk, namely that the speakers did not know (or at least pretended not to know) that their bon mots would be written down afterwards. The note, thus, presents readers with two impressions: that

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fat and indolent; a very good scholar; sits within, and does nothing but read or compose" (Spence 135). I am quoting from the edition Byron owned (edited by Edmund Malone and published by John Murray in 1820). A modern edition (edited by James M. Osborn) came out in 1966.

119 The advertisement informs readers that Spence's original manuscript was even more disorganised (cf. Spence iv). The nineteenth-century editor attempted to create some order by sorting the anecdotes according to the person to which they refer.

120 Byron's "Detached Thoughts" likewise often imitate spoken discourse while also drawing attention to the fact that he was writing them down. For instance, Byron recorded: "At Brighthelmstone – (I love orthography at length) in the year 1808 Hobhouse, Scrope Davies, Major Cooper – and myself – having dined together with Lord Delvin – Count (I forget the french [sic] Emigrant nomenclature) and others – did about the middle of the night (we *four*) proceed to a house of Gambling – being *amongst us* possest of about twenty guineas of ready cash – with which we had to maintain about as many of our whoreson horses & servants – besides household and whorehold expenditure. We had I say – twenty guineas or so – & lost them – returning home in bad humour" (*BLJ* 9: 39, original emphasis). (The anecdote ends with Davies and Hobhouse almost killing each other but reconciling the next day.)

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of hearing the 'real' Byron chat to them about his past and that of listening to the words of a carefully crafted, rakish, worldly persona.

What adds to this ambiguity is that the annotation also to some degree pretends that it was *not* designed for the eyes (or ears) of strangers. While I fully agree with McGann's and Stabler's observation that Byron's works constantly draw attention to their awareness of their readership(s), I would like to argue that they are just as much characterised by their feigned *obliviousness* to readers' presence (cf. Stabler, "Byron, Conversation and Discord" 114–17; 121; McGann, "Private Poetry, Public Deception" 117). True, the annotation suggests that it is written to be read by the public – its conversational nature, its inclusion in a bestselling poem, and the fact that it is an instance of self-recorded table-talk attest to this. But at the same time, it also appears like a memo exclusively reserved for Byron's personal use, which somehow found its way into *Don Juan* – pretending that readers are merely allowed to eavesdrop on Byron talking to himself.

However, even this partial illusion of privacy and intimacy is undermined by the fact that the boundaries between private and public writing were extremely blurred during the Romantic age and that, as a consequence, the *purely* personal text did not exist. Even if something *seems* to be written for the eyes of the author only and sometimes one specific other person, it was nearly always written with a much larger and perhaps unwanted audience in mind. For example, during this era, letters were more or less treated as public-domain even during the writer's lifetime, and confidential correspondence often met the eyes of many other (contemporary) readers beside their intended recipient. One need only think of Thomas Moore, who sent a private letter to Longman, telling him that he did not like Scott's *The Lord of the Isles*, only to receive an answer from Scott's (and his own) whole publishing house, Longman, Hurst, Orme, Rees, and Brown (cf. *BLJ* 4: 280; T. Moore, *Letters* 1: 358).[121] Likewise, Byron's publisher Murray felt that it was his "duty" to read to "every gentleman who is in the habit of visiting at my house" a passage from one of Byron's letters, in which he claims that he knew that Leigh Hunt's journal *The Liberal* was destined to fail and that he only contributed

121 The absence of postal secrecy is also shown in Byron's letters from Italy, which were intercepted by the Austrians due to his association with the *carbonari*. Since he knew that the Austrians would read his correspondence, he included a brief aside to them in one of his letters to Murray, so that "they may see in my most legible hand – that I think them damned Scoundrels and Barbarians – their Emperor a fool – & themselves more fools than he" (*BLJ* 7: 238–39). For public-private letters shortly before Byron's age and the fact that they were likewise read by many people beside the intended recipient, also see W. L. Jones 20–22.

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to it out of charity (Murray 455; cf. *BLJ* 10: 13). Another famous case of 'postal indiscretion' is related to Byron's lampoon on his friend Hobhouse ("My Boy Hobby-O"), which he sent in a private letter to Murray, who promptly got it published in the *Morning Post*.[122] Furthermore, almost every public figure in Byron's time kept journals and wrote letters with an eye to posthumous publication.[123] In writing such 'personal' documents, authors knew that their words would not only be read by themselves and their correspondents but also by posterity. In a letter to Murray, Byron half-jokingly refers to this fact and tells him that he wanted to avoid "smart [i.e. biting] postscripts which would not adorn our mutual archives" (*BLJ* 8: 187). (The letter is now, of course, in the John Murray Archive.) As noted above, Byron also gave his friends information on his correspondents, so that they could contact them after his death and prepare the letters for publication.[124] What is more, Byron and his contemporaries knew that, even if authors (or their literary executors) wanted to keep certain writings hidden from the public eye and even if these writings indeed remained unpublished after their death, it was still rather easy to gain access to them (unless, of course, the late author's overly concerned friends destroyed them). For example, Byron recorded that John Allen (a close friend of Lord and Lady Holland) lent him "a quantity of Burns's unpublished, and never-to-be-published, Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs" (*BLJ* 3: 239). Byron was certainly delighted to know that future readers of his own letters (published or not) would stumble upon "Turdsworth" and the "Son of a Bitch" Southey and would undertake great efforts to figure out what exactly the

122 Even satires that were not immediately printed often existed in a curious liminal stage between private coterie and public readership. As Gary Dyer has shown, (print) publication and publicity were not necessarily the same – satirical verses could circulate in manuscript for years, being transcribed and distributed by ever new readers, before finally being printed (cf. Dyer, "Circulation of Satiric Poetry" 68).

123 Examples of such private-public journals include those of Mary Berry, Charles Greville, and Harriet Arbuthnot, as well as of Byron's friends Hobhouse and Moore. When Byron got into an altercation with Hobhouse (who objected to the planned publication of Byron's *Memoirs* or at least to the fact that, instead of himself, Moore was to be their editor), Byron told Murray: "Does Mr. Hobhouse dispute my right to leave Memoirs of myself for posthumous publication? Have not thousands done it? […] But the best is – that I happen to know that *he himself* keeps – and has kept for many years a regular diary […] – and has *he* done this with no view to posthumous publication? I will not believe it" (*BLJ* 9: 70, original emphasis).

124 Even before his death, Byron's contemporaries guessed as much: John Gibson Lockhart commented that Byron had been "writing certain letters, which, although you [Byron] say they 'never can be published,' most undoubtedly will, one day or other, be published, and have been written, one and all of them, for the express purpose of being published" (Lockhart, *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* 106).

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"above two hundred pl & opt Cs" were that he had "obtained" in Greece (*BLJ* 7: 158; 6: 76; 2: 23).

All of these examples show that the private, unmediated, monologic nature of a diary entry or memo that Byron's annotation partly imitates was a chimaera in the first place. In publishing the anecdote in *Don Juan*, Byron merely pre-empted the loss of privacy that awaited his 'personal' writings after his death. The fact that even seemingly confidential texts were composed with at least a vague idea of an audience in mind casts further doubt on the possibility of sincere, complete self-revelation through writing. Who can be entirely himself when he knows that his words will be judged by others? This notion that purely personal and, thus, sincere writing was impossible was even further aggravated by Byron's keen sense that he had to take control over his posthumous reputation. For instance, when Hobhouse accused him of "buying" Moore as his biographer, he retorted: "I suppose […] that like most men who have been talked about – I might have had […] a biographer without purchase – since most other scribblers have two or three – gratis" (Hobhouse, *Byron's Bulldog* 321; *BLJ* 9: 88).[125]

The digressive anecdotal annotations show Byron become his own biographer – with all the ambiguities entailed by this. He suggests that readers can use these annotations as the most intimate and reliable source on his life, opinions, and feelings (at least before his letters and the *Memoirs* are published) – creating the impression that they are sitting next to him and are eagerly listening to him reminisce about his adventures. At the same time, as we have seen, readers had sufficient reasons to fear that the essence of the 'real' Byron that they tried to glean from these notes was just a carefully constructed image of how he wanted to be seen by contemporaries and posterity.

Conclusion

The discussion of Byron's 'personal' annotations in *CHP*, *The Giaour*, and *Don Juan* has shed light on some of the central problems that are posed not only by these three works but by his entire œuvre. It has shown how Byron constantly dares his readers to find his experiences, opinions, and feelings inscribed in his works only to teasingly frustrate their attempts at doing so. Byron's 'personal' annotations highlight why – apart from the few hints given in the poems and in the other paratexts – readers were so eager to discover Byron in his works in the first place. By tracing even the minutest details of his writings (e.g. the date of a specific thunderstorm) back to the author's own life, they suggest that

125 For the importance of literary biography in the Romantic age, also see H. Jackson, "What's Biography Got to Do With It?".

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nearly everything in Byron's works is based on his personal experience. This impression is underpinned by notes such as the one on the facial expression of corpses in *The Giaour*, which suggests that Byron is harbouring secrets which can never be explicitly disclosed in his poetry but which readers are dared to discover by reading between the lines. In Byron, self-revelation always entails self-concealment and self-mystification.

While Byron's notes often insinuate that his poems are at least partly factual (i.e. based on his own life) and that they are 'sincere' (i.e. that Byron is expressing his actual feelings and attitudes in them), they also constantly cast considerable doubt on these impressions. The notes in *CHP* and *The Giaour* do so mainly by supplementing serious passages with facetious notes, forcing readers to choose between three options: can the 'real' Byron's feelings be found in the notes rather than in the poem? Or can readers discover the 'real' Byron only in the jarring contrast between text and paratext – taking them as a hint of his fundamental ambivalence towards himself, his work, and the world, as a sign that self-contradiction is the highest form of sincerity? Or, lastly, are the self-contradictory and jarring juxtapositions of hilarity and melancholy not so sincere after all and rather just capricious role-playing?

The digressive anecdotal annotation in *Don Juan* even goes a step further than the latter option and raises questions about the possibility of sincere, complete, uninhibited self-expression through writing in general. It hints at the fact that when authors pretend to be at their most private – seemingly engaged in a soliloquy with no audience whatsoever or talking to a single privileged collocutor – they are actually carefully crafting the *illusion* of privacy for a readership of whom they are fully aware.

The effect of Byron's 'personal' annotations depends to a considerable extent on their employment, transformation, and subversion of various discourse traditions. For one, they make use of the assumption that self-annotations allow readers to hear authors speak in their own voice. (Of course, there are exceptions to this: some notes contain clear warning signs that readers will not find the author's own voice in them, e.g. editorial fictions that are apparent from the very beginning of the work, annotations that are signed by (fictional or real) people who are not the author, as well as notes that include obvious mistakes and ludicrous interpretations.)[126] While readers are aware that the narrator or protagonist of the main text may owe more to literary tradition or fashionable

126 Susan Matthias, for instance, argues that "[t]he paratextual elements [in *The Giaour*] also permit Byron to speak in his own voice" (Matthias 98), and Ourania Chatsiou contends that Byron's "voice dominates his notes" (Chatsiou, "Robert Southey's 'Old Curiosity-Shops'" 21).

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posing than to the author's real character, self-annotations *seem* to be unmediated and to be directly expressing the author's thoughts and feelings. Byron's annotations in *CHP* and *The Giaour* make use of this assumption in order to enhance their subversive effect with respect to the poem: if the witty, cheerful voice of the notes is that of the 'real' Byron, it becomes hard to fully equate the author with his melancholy protagonists and narrators.

However, especially in *The Giaour*, the notes also draw attention to the fact that this assumption may be wrong and that the voice in an annotation may be just as indebted to artistic conventions and role-playing as the voices in the poem. This is mainly achieved by forcing readers to reinterpret the work in the light of the editorial fiction that is introduced in the very last note to the poem. The example of *The Giaour* shows that it is not sufficient to interpret self-annotations as authors commenting on their own fictions but that it is necessary to also analyse them as fictional annotatorial personas responding to fictional poetic personas. For other works in which this question becomes especially important, see chapters 3.3.3 and 3.4.1.

Moreover, Byron's 'personal' annotations consistently subvert the discourse conventions of xenographic notes. Their explanatory function is often extremely limited. In some cases, they answer questions that most (sane) readers would never have asked (e.g. 'on which exact date did Byron see the sunset described here?'). And in others, they indeed elucidate the text but shift the focus from the content of their explanation to its mocking tone or entertain readers with autobiographical anecdotes that have hardly any relation to the annotated passage. Furthermore, Byron's 'personal' annotations inscribe themselves in a variety of other discourse conventions: ethnographic travelogues, letters, and diary entries (*CHP*); serious antiquarian commentaries as in *Vathek* and subversive notes in editorial fictions like the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (*The Giaour*); and table-talk as well as private-public journal entries (*Don Juan*).

As I have shown, *The Giaour* also serves as an example of the dynamics of ambiguation, tentative disambiguation, and re-ambiguation. For one, this is due to the different paths that readers can take through the work (first reading it without the annotations, then with them, then with the knowledge of its alleged 'double authorship' by the Levantine storyteller and the European translator). For another, these dynamics depend on the different ways in which our reading of this work is influenced by other works written by and about Byron. Examples include the similarity of the Giaour to Byron's other Byronic heroes, Byron's pronouncements on mobility in *Don Juan*, and Medwin's anecdote about the autobiographical incident that inspired *The Giaour*.

Byron's personal annotations can be seen as one of the reasons for the enormous appeal of his works. They constantly whet readers' appetite for private

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revelations but never fully satisfy their curiosity. The complex interplay of Byron's poems and notes ambiguates his public profile; it offers different possible images of him while never allowing readers to settle for one and often raising the question whether he can be found in his works at all. As a result, Byron's works are rarely straightforwardly autobiographical; rather, they are a potentially autobiographical scavenger hunt with misleading, contradictory, and missing clues.

The present chapter has concentrated on annotations that provide the same amount of information to all readerships, thus giving all readers the roughly same glimpse at the 'real' Byron and frustrating their desire for further revelations in the same way. In the next chapter, I will show how Byron uses his annotations to privilege some groups of readers over others – providing some with seemingly more intimate knowledge of himself, while excluding others from grasping the full meaning of his notes and poems.

3.2.2 *Differentiating Readerships – Social Networking – Self-Presentation*

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I quoted the insights that Byron achieves "self-dramatisation or self-creation through combined self-revelation and self-concealment" (Graham 28) and that his poems are "a mode of presentation in which disguise and disclosure intermix" (Soderholm 184). In order to achieve this mix, Byron uses two main strategies: in his personal, anecdotal annotations discussed above, he provides all readers with more or less the same information. With the exception of the case in which Byron hints at the potentially autobiographical background of *The Giaour* (him saving a woman from being drowned in the same manner as Leila), these notes do not rely on the fact that some readers (e.g. Byron's close friends) know a lot more about the context of certain passages than others. These notes may still contain hints that Byron does not dare to 'tell all' (e.g. in the annotation on the facial expressions of corpses), but they do not create the impression that they are deliberately withholding information from *specific* groups of readers. In the cases discussed above, thus, the ambiguity of Byron's personal notes mainly arises from the fact that they suggest that readers can use them to learn something about the life and opinions of the 'real' author while at the same time casting doubt on this impression.

In the present chapter, I will focus on Byron's second strategy of combining self-revelation and self-concealment, namely on annotations that have different meanings for different readerships. These notes use various strategies of excluding certain readers from fully understanding the passages and notes while apparently giving other, more informed readers privileged access to the author and his works. Thus, while (self-)annotations may theoretically be used

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to bridge the gap between various readerships and provide 'outsiders' with enough information to understand the text just as well as 'insiders', the notes discussed here draw the line between the initiated and the uninitiated much more emphatically. This chapter hence takes a look at both the production and the perception side of strategic ambiguity: it analyses the means by which ambiguities are created and the extent to which different interpretations of a text depend on readers' different levels of knowledge of (and, in some cases, personal involvement in) the background of a given passage.

Take, for instance, the following example: when describing the (presumed) plain of Troy in Byron's *The Bride of Abydos*, the narrator exclaims

> Minstrel [Homer]! with thee to muse, to mourn –
> To trace again those fields of yore –
> Believing every hillock green
> Contains no fabled hero's ashes –
> And that around the undoubted scene
> Thine own 'broad Hellespont' still dashes –
> Be long my lot – and cold were he
> Who there could gaze denying thee!
> (*Bride of Abydos* 2.31–38)

The expression "broad Hellespont" alludes to the "Ἑλλήσποντος ἀπείρων" (boundless Hellespont) in the *Iliad* (Homer, *Iliad* 24.545). Byron appears to have anticipated readers wondering why he chose the term "broad" over the more literal translation and presents them with the following facetious annotation:

> The wrangling about this epithet, 'the broad Hellespont,' or the 'boundless Hellespont,' whether it means one or the other, or what it means at all, has been beyond all possibility of detail. I have even heard it disputed on the spot; and not foreseeing a speedy conclusion to the controversy, amused myself by swimming across it in the meantime, and probably may again, before the point is settled. Indeed, the question as to the truth of 'the tale of Troy divine' still continues, much of it resting upon the word 'απείρος' [boundless]: probably Homer had the same notion of distance that a coquette has of time, and when he talks of the boundless, means half a mile; as the latter, by a like figure, when she says eternal attachment, simply specifies three weeks. (*Bride of Abydos* 2.36n; *CPW* 3: 438–39)

This annotation is directed at different (though partly overlapping) readerships and, as a consequence, has different meanings for each of them. The readerships in this case can be distinguished according to (a) the knowledge they have about the scholarly and autobiographical backgrounds of the note, (b) their possible personal involvement in the matters alluded to in the passage, and (c) – based on their knowledge and involvement – the functions that

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this annotation performs for them.[127] In the case of this annotation, one can infer four possible readerships, which are here listed starting with the least informed and moving forward to the most knowledgeable and involved: (1) the general reading public,[128] (2) a scholarly audience, (3) everyone who had attentively read John Cam Hobhouse's *A Journey Through Albania*, and (4) Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse himself.

To (1) the general reading public, Byron signals that he is a gentleman and adventurer, not a pedantic scholar. His refusal to discuss the question in a serious, academic manner also presents a marked difference from other

127 This notion of different readerships that can be inferred and differentiated from each other on the basis of a single passage is quite different from the concept of the implied reader. Wayne C. Booth famously argued that the implied reader is a persona "whose beliefs must coincide with the author's" and that it serves as the author's "second self" (Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction* 138). Furthermore, in his overview of different concepts of implied readership, Wolf Schmid defines the implied reader as "the author's image of the recipient that is fixed and objectified in the text by specific indexical signs" (Schmid § 1). Schmid differentiates between two types of implied readers. The first one is a "*presumed addressee* to whom the work is directed and whose linguistic codes, ideological norms, and aesthetic ideas must be considered if the work is to be understood. In this function, the implied reader is the bearer of the codes and norms presumed in the readership" (Schmid § 5, original emphasis). The second (closer to Booth's) is an "*ideal recipient* who understands the work in a way that optimally matches its structure and adopts the interpretive position and aesthetic standpoint put forward by the work" (Schmid § 7, original emphasis). Both of these notions refer to a single, uniform readership who is best suited to understand, and to accept the propositions of, a given text in its entirety. The notion of readerships that I am adopting here, however, takes into account that many self-annotations (and literary texts in general) deliberately play with different readerships, some of which are not at all well-equipped to understand (or to accept) the propositions of a given note in its entirety. In other words, these notes are directed at various readerships that have different levels of knowledge and, possibly, different opinions and attitudes towards the matter(s) presented.

128 This general reading public was, of course, by no means a uniform mass, and who was part of it could change from passage to passage. Who I mean by this general readership is everyone who (1) had at least partial access to the annotated work in question (i.e. through authentic editions, pirated editions, long quotes in reviews, or extracts in commonplace books), (2) who had no specialised knowledge or insider information on the background of a given passage, and (3) who was not personally mentioned/alluded to in this passage. Thus, depending on the passage in question, 'general readership' can mean, for example, anyone who is not a personal acquaintance of Byron, or who does not move in literary circles, or who is not able to detect a certain allusion, or who does not understand a foreign word or slang term. In other words, the term 'general reading public' is here always used to refer to those readers who have less knowledge about, or personal involvement in, specific aspects of a certain passage than any other reader or group of readers. People who were part of the general readership of one passage could be insiders in another passage, and vice versa.

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contemporary poets (one need only think of Thomas Moore's scholarly notes on his oriental tales). For this general readership, the annotation thus serves to stress Byron's exceptionality: unlike most contemporaries, he has the means to travel to Greece; unlike many of his co-travellers, he is not interested in learned discussion; and unlike many of his fellow poets, he does not feel the need to bore his readers with scholarship in the annotations but entertains them with comical and exciting personal anecdotes. And, of course, the annotation also gives Byron the opportunity to once again brag about having swum the Hellespont.[129]

To (2) the scholars among his readers, Byron signals that he knows about the controversy regarding the historical accuracy of the *Iliad* and the existence of Troy, and about the role that the expression "boundless Hellespont" plays in this discussion.[130] Though affirming that he is educated enough to be aware of the debate and to take part in it (using both the poem and the note to argue for the existence of Troy), Byron also stresses that he rejects their too scholarly way of approaching the question. "The truth of 'the tale of Troy divine'" can be felt on the spot; it does not depend on linguistic hair-splitting.

On the most personal level, the annotation is a mild jibe at Byron's friend Hobhouse. He had accompanied Byron on his travels through the Ottoman Empire and, in 1813, published *A Journey Through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey*. This work includes a seven(!)-pages-long scholarly discussion about the possible reasons why Homer called the Hellespont "boundless" even though the strait is obviously not boundless (cf. Hobhouse, *Journey* 2: 790–97). It was him whom Byron had heard dispute the question "on the spot".[131] Based on their degree of personal involvement in the matter alluded to in the note, one can here distinguish between (3) those readers who are able to detect (and relish) the taunt against Hobhouse, and (4) Hobhouse himself, whose pedantry is being made fun of.[132]

129 Other instances of Byron boasting about his swimming feats can be found in "On Swimming from Sestos to Abydos", *Don Juan* 2.105, and the "Letter to John Murray, Esq.", which was published in the context of the Pope-Bowles controversy (cf. Byron, *CMP* 131).

130 The most prominent work arguing that Troy never existed and that the *Iliad* has no foundation in history is Jacob Bryant's 1796 *A Dissertation Concerning the War of Troy and the Expedition of the Grecians as Described by Homer*. Byron makes disparaging remarks about Bryant in his Ravenna Journal and in *Don Juan* (cf. *BLJ* 8: 22; *Don Juan* 4.76; 4.101).

131 A decade after their journey, Byron noted in his Ravenna Journal that Hobhouse and others had "bored [him] with their learned localities" when visiting the plain of Troy (*BLJ* 8: 22).

132 For a more detailed analysis of this passage in *The Bride of Abydos* and its annotation, see Cheeke 63–66.

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The four readerships in this annotation differ from each other with respect to their awareness of the other readerships. For instance, the general reading public are able to infer from the note that it is also directed at scholars, and they can deduce which functions the note may serve for this scholarly readership. The allusion to Hobhouse's book, however, is not apparent to this general readership. As a consequence, they are oblivious to the third and fourth readerships and to the functions this note performs for these; they are not able to grasp the annotation in its full complexity. What is more, even *if* the general reading public inferred that the annotation is also directed at the person who "disputed [the question] on the spot", they would only understand that the note serves to mock this person but would remain ignorant as to who exactly this person is, which robs the note of part of its bite.

The notion of different readerships that are inscribed in Byron's works is, of course, not a new one. In his discussion of "When We Two Parted", Jerome McGann points out that "Byron uses different levels of poetic coding to define his audiences" and, when referring to the 'separation stanzas' in the first canto of *Don Juan*, he argues that "the passage has imagined various contemporary readerships" (McGann, "Byron and 'the Truth in Masquerade'" 194; McGann, "Private Poetry, Public Deception" 121).[133] Gary Dyer, analysing a passage in *Don Juan* that will also be discussed below, contends that Byron acknowledges that his readers "are not an undifferentiated public but are publics – discrete if often overlapping subcultures and counterpublics" (Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 574). Furthermore, Tom Mole argues that *CHP* "imagines a […] split audience. On the one hand, a faceless public; on the other, a limited, sophisticated and sympathetic audience of friends" (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 46).

The present chapter will elaborate on these approaches by putting an even stronger focus on unravelling how exactly Byron differentiates between readerships and which purposes this differentiation serves.[134] Byron's annotation on

133 In McGann, the notion of "poetic coding" refers to "playing with language, developing systems of punning and coded talk which require some kind of special knowledge to decipher" (McGann, "Byron and 'the Truth in Masquerade'" 194).

134 The most elaborate classification of the various strategies and functions of differentiating readerships/audiences can be found in Peter Kühn's study *Mehrfachadressierung: Untersuchungen zur adressatenspezifischen Polyvalenz sprachlichen Handelns* (see esp. 6; 113; 133–34; 137; 139; 153). For instance, he differentiates between cases in which it is clear to uninitiated readerships that an utterance has a further meaning which they cannot understand ('encrypted' multi-addressing) and cases in which an ambiguous utterance seems to be absolutely unambiguous to the unitiniated, thereby veiling its further readership(s) and meaning(s) ('conspirational' multi-addressing) (cf. Kühn 137–39). Kühn's work is primarily concerned with non-literary utterances. Most of his examples

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the "broad Hellespont" highlights four aspects that can play a role when analysing how a given self-annotation differentiates between various readerships. First of all, who are the different readerships, and according to which specific traits can they be distinguished from one another? Second, which readerships are obvious to, or inferable by, other readerships, and which remain veiled from some or all other readerships? In this context, it is also important to distinguish between cases in which it is merely clear to others *that* the annotation is directed at yet another readership and cases in which it is also clear at *whom* exactly it is being directed. Third, does the annotation allow other readerships to infer which significance it has for a certain readership, or does it obscure the functions that it serves with respect to this readership? Hence, an annotation may hint at its own ambiguity while depriving some readerships of the means to uncover its additional meanings and purposes. Fourth and last, which readerships are aware of (some of) the various audiences and meanings of a note, and which remain oblivious to them, only detecting one meaning where there are many?

As these questions show, even though an annotation may be ambiguous, this ambiguity is not always made explicit to all readerships. One may, hence, distinguish between the implicit and the explicit exclusion of readerships. In the first case, the uninitiated readerships are unaware that they are being excluded from part of the annotation's meaning. In the second, the note overtly teases them with secrets that they cannot uncover.[135] (Of course, different passages in an annotation may also combine these textual strategies in various ways.) In the latter case, the effect of differentiating readerships can itself be ambiguous. On the one hand, such notes create the impression that the general reading public have the privilege of eavesdropping on (half-)private conversations between authors and their associates. On the other hand,

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are drawn from political speeches, but he also refers to, for instance, employment references and patient information leaflets. His focus on non-literary texts means that he treats the differentiation of readerships as a means to a practical end rather than as a possible end in itself. As a consequence, his close-readings are almost exclusively concerned with the *functions* (i.e. the 'what and why') of multi-addressed utterances, whereas the present chapter will also analyse *how* exactly the text passages in question differentiate between readerships. Furthermore, Kühn's non-literary examples almost never address their own use of multi-addressing, let alone teasingly parade it. In contrast, as will be shown in the course of this chapter, the differentiation of readerships in literary texts can be highly self-reflexive, ostentatious, and playful.

135 With respect to *Don Juan*, for example, McGann notes that the manner in which the poem is written "is precisely designed *not* to disguise its own procedures of mystification. Rather, [it is] flaunting its doubletalk" (McGann, "Byron and 'the Truth in Masquerade'" 194, original emphasis).

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by alluding to pieces of information that only certain groups of readers possess, such annotations again remind the general audience that they will never entirely be let into the authors' (alleged) secrets. Differentiating readerships through annotations thus, among other things, allows authors to publicly sport and foster their social network[136] and to forge (or loosen) a bond with different groups of readers.

3.2.2.1 Literary Background Knowledge: Byron's 'Non-Plagiarism' from *Christabel*

In the following example, the different pieces of background knowledge that some readerships have and that others lack are exclusively concerned with the literary scene, especially with plagiarism controversies and the publishing industry. In Byron's time, journals concerned with literary matters were fond of discussing potential cases of plagiarism.[137] For example, a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Feb. 1818) accused Byron of having plagiarised Radcliffe, Voltaire, Parnell, Shakespeare, and Pope (cf. "Plagiarisms of Lord Byron"), whereas another letter to the same magazine (May 1818) absolved him from all accusations (cf. "Lord Byron Vindicated"). It is no surprise, then, that Byron tried to forestall such controversies by pointing out passages in his works that could be perceived as plagiarised but that he (allegedly) wrote when still being unaware of a text that contained the same ideas and images.[138] Such a

136 Byron was by no means the only author in the Romantic age to use his annotations for social networking. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey's propensity to sing each other's praises in their notes was so notorious that the author of *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* (1821, most likely written by John Gibson Lockhart) commented: "the Lakers are not understood to be much in the habit of giving good – very good words – to any one beyond their own sweet circle. Read their notes. […] You will then perceive as all that have read them already have done, – that in fact the Lakers would fain have us believe there are no poets in the world but themselves" (Lockhart, *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron* 70). The notes in Madame de Staël's *Corinne* likewise contain compliments to her father, to Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Vittorio Alfieri, and Friedrich Schlegel. And Scott, in his notes, was fond of both promoting his friends' works and of including inside jokes that, as the notes assure readers, only those who know Scott personally would understand (cf. Mayer, "Scott's Editing" 677).

137 For plagiarism in the Romantic age, also see Mazzeo, *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* as well as E. F. Smith, *Byron's Plagiarism as Judged by his Contemporaries*.

138 That Byron indeed sometimes plagiarised (not only from literary works but also from travel narratives and even cookbooks) is illustrated in Cochran, "Byron and Plagiarism". Also see p. 198 n above for a case in which Byron plagiarised an entire annotation – presenting the information as if it were drawn from personal experience when he is actually just copying a published letter by German poet Friedrich von Matthisson.

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case famously occurs in *The Siege of Corinth.*[139] In the annotated passage, the protagonist Alp discovers his beloved Francesca (or, rather, her ghost):

> Was it the wind, through some hollow stone,
> Sent that soft and tender moan?
> He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
> But it was unrippled as glass may be;
> He looked on the long grass – it waved not a blade;
> How was that gentle sound conveyed?
> He looked to the banners – each flag lay still,
> So did the leaves on Cithaeron's hill,
> And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
> What did that sudden sound bespeak?
> He turned to the left – is he sure of sight?
> There sate a lady, youthful and bright! (*Siege of Corinth* 476–87)

The following annotation is appended to the first line of the passage:

> I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr Coleridge, called 'Christabel.' It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited: and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges. (*Siege of Corinth* 476n; *CPW* 3: 486)

The passage in *Christabel* that this annotation most likely refers to depicts the moment right before Christabel meets Geraldine for the first time (S. T. Coleridge, *Christabel* 1.37–50).[140] The two passages in Byron and Coleridge both describe the discovery of a beautiful (and otherworldly) woman, both

139 Another example of such a note appears in the appendix for *The Two Foscari*, where Byron declares that he used the expression "ocean-Rome" for Venice before having discovered it in Lady Morgan's *Italy* (cf. *CPW* 6: 222). This note not only functions as a defence against accusations of plagiarism but also serves to clarify Byron's political allegiances: Morgan's "fearless and excellent work" (as Byron extols it in the appendix) deplores the dire state of contemporary Italy and attacks its Austrian rulers, for which she, in turn, was heavily criticised by conservative English reviewers.

140 The passage in *Christabel* reads: "The Lady sprung up suddenly, / The lovely Lady, Christabel! / It moan'd as near, as near can be, / But what it is, She cannot tell – / On the other Side it seems to be / Of the huge brown-breasted old Oak Tree. / The Night is chill; the Forest bare; / Is it the Wind that moaneth bleak? / There is not Wind enough in the Air / To move away the ringlet Curl / From the lovely Lady's Cheek – / There is not wind

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refer to moans of which neither Alp nor Christabel can discover the origin at first, and both passages mention the absolutely still air. Furthermore, both segments are written in what Jeff Strabone describes as "irregularly recurring anapests" or, more precisely, as "anapests [deployed] irregularly throughout otherwise iambic poems" (Strabone 265; 287).[141] Hence, even though there are no direct verbal echoes from *Christabel* in this passage and even though it seems that that Byron had indeed not heard *Christabel* being recited until after having composed this passage (see p. 319 n below), the number of parallels between the passages suffices to justify accusations of plagiarism. However, by addressing different readerships, Byron's note goes far beyond simply defending him against such charges. In order to be able to distinguish these different readerships and the ensuing respective functions of Byron's annotation, a brief overview of the publication history of *Christabel* is necessary.

The Complicated Publishing History of Christabel

As Byron's note explains, *Christabel* was yet unpublished when *The Siege of Corinth* came out in February 1816. According to the preface of *Christabel*, the first part of the poem had been written in 1797 and the second in 1800. Despite remaining unpublished for a long time, *Christabel* circulated in manuscript even as early as from 1798 onwards and was often recited by Coleridge and others (e.g. Scott) in front of small private audiences (cf. Laxer 168–71). In December 1811, Coleridge wrote a letter discussing whether Walter Scott's 1805 *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* contains unacknowledged borrowings from the yet unpublished *Christabel* (cf. S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 3: 355–61). Coleridge never sent the letter and its addressee is unknown (from Coleridge's letter it appears that his correspondent was convinced of Scott's plagiarism and wanted Coleridge to compile a list of parallels between his and Scott's work). Coleridge's letter considers the arguments brought forward against Scott in detail but (perhaps rather disingenuously)[142] absolves him from all charges and

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enough to twirl / The One red Leaf, the last of its Clan, / That dances as often as dance it can" (S. T. Coleridge, *Christabel* 1.37–50).

141 For a more detailed analysis of the metre of *Christabel*, its origins, and its influence on Scott and Byron, see Strabone 261–97. For Byron's comments on the unusual formal features of *The Siege of Corinth*, see *BLJ* 5: 29.

142 A letter to his nephew, written in 1825, shows that Coleridge was indeed quite piqued about Scott's unacknowledged use of *Christabel*. He points out that "Sir W. Scott *might* have served me [by promoting *Christabel*] if he had at [that] time said only *one half of* what he has since avowed, in large companies" (S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 5: 437, original emphasis). For a more detailed discussion of Coleridge's thoughts on Scott and Wordsworth's drawing inspiration from *Christabel* without properly acknowledging it, see Paley *passim*.

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concludes that the similarities are the "result of mere Coincidence between two Writers of similar Pursuits" (cf. S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 3: 358). At that point, the plagiarism controversy still seems to have been a private rather than a public one.[143] Accordingly, the general, 'uninitiated' readership – in this case meaning anyone who did not move in certain literary circles – would neither have known about the existence of *Christabel* in the first place, nor about the fact that some people accused Scott of having plagiarised it.

Four years later, in March 1815, Coleridge asked Byron to read some of his poems in manuscript and to "recommend them to some respectable Publisher" (S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 4: 561). Coleridge explained that he feared that the publishers (knowing of his dire financial situation) would not offer much for the copyright if he approached them directly and argued that Byron's recommendation would "treble the amount of their offer" (4: 561). Byron agreed to help him (cf. *BLJ* 4: 285–86). In June 1815, Byron heard Scott recite *Christabel* and, in October of the same year, highly praised it in a letter to Coleridge, expressing his hopes that the poem would be among those that Coleridge planned to publish (cf. *BLJ* 4: 318; 4: 321). Coleridge sent Byron a manuscript copy of *Christabel* and apparently must have included a comment (no longer extant) in which he discussed the accusations of plagiarism against Scott.[144] In a slightly earlier letter, he also implicitly charged Wordsworth with not owning his debts to *Christabel*, explaining that he has "not learnt with what motive Wordsworth omitted the original avertisement [sic] prefixed to his White Doe, that the peculiar metre and mode of narration he had imitated from the Christabel" (S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 4: 603). On 27 October 1815, Byron acknowledged that he had received the manuscript of *Christabel* and defended Scott, affirming that "[a]ll I have ever seen of him has been frank, fair, and warm in regard towards you" (*BLJ* 4: 321). He then went on to explain that

> I am partly in the same scrape myself, as you will see by the enclosed extract from an unpublished poem [*The Siege of Corinth*], which I assure you was written before (not seeing your *Christabelle* [sic], for that you know I never did till this day), but before I heard Mr. S. [Scott] repeat it, which he did in June last, and

143 I could not find any reviews or other public discussions of the allegations against Scott in the years right after *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* had been published. The first time that Scott acknowledged his debt to *Christabel* in print was in 1830, possibly in response to Thomas Medwin's 1824 *Conversations of Lord Byron*, in which Medwin quotes Byron arguing that "'Christabel' was the origin of all Scott's metrical tales" (Medwin 172; cf. 202; cf. Paley 106).

144 The editor of Coleridge's letters surmises that it might have been a copy of the unsent letter to an unknown correspondent mentioned above (cf. editor's n for Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 4: 602).

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> this thing was begun in January and more than half written before the Summer. The coincidence is only in this particular passage, and, if you will allow me, in publishing it […], I will give the extract from you, and state that the original thought and expression have been many years in the *Christabelle*. The stories, scenes, etc., are in general quite different[.] […] I know not what you may think of this. If you like, I will cut out the passage, and do as well as I can without, – or what you please. (*BLJ* 4: 321–22, original emphasis)[145]

A day later, Byron wrote to Thomas Moore and asked him to "review [Coleridge] favourably in the *Edinburgh Review*" as soon as the collection of poems would be published (*BLJ* 4: 324).[146] On 4 November 1815, he urged his own publisher John Murray to publish *Christabel* and furthermore explained that he wanted "to make a short extract from Christabelle in a note about Coleridge", which he planned to insert in *The Siege of Corinth* (*BLJ* 4: 331). Murray agreed to publish Coleridge's poem.

When Byron's *The Siege of Corinth* came out, most reviews of the poem did not comment on its compliment to Coleridge. Only the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Mar. 1816) remarked that "[i]n the notes, Lord Byron […] anticipates a charge which no classical reader could have made", before quoting the entire annotation ("Review of *The Siege of Corinth*" 242).[147] However, in promoting Coleridge's poem, Murray made full use of Byron's note: the advertisements (e.g. in the *Morning Chronicle*, 16 and 20 May 1816) quoted the annotation's praise of it as a "wild and singularly original and beautiful poem" (cf. Laxer 172; 181). And when *Christabel* was finally published in May 1816, many critics mentioned Byron's annotation on the poem in their reviews; some even introduced their articles with a quote from it.[148]

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145 Unfortunately, Coleridge's reply to this letter is no longer extant (his next surviving letter to Byron dates from 17 February 1816).

146 The review of *Christabel* that would eventually be published in the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 27, no. 53, Sep. 1816) harshly criticises Coleridge's poem as well as Byron's praise of it, and briefly digresses to ridicule Byron's recent publications. It is not clear whether the review was written by Thomas Moore (it is highly unlikely that one of Byron's closest friends would attack him in this manner). The review might also have been written by William Hazlitt. For a recent discussion of the possible authorship of the review, see Benatti and Tonra.

147 It is not really clear what the reviewer's reference to the "classical reader" means. Perhaps it alludes to the fact that Coleridge by no means invented the metre he used in *Christabel* (for Coleridge's models, see Strabone 269–75).

148 See, for instance, the *Theatrical Inquisitor* (vol. 8, Mar. 1816) ("Theatrical and Literary Chit-Chat" 240) and the *Monthly Review* (vol. 82, Jan. 1817) ("Review of *Christabel; Kubla Khan, a Vision; The Pains of Sleep*" 24). Those who refer to Byron's praise right at the beginning of their review include the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 27, no. 53, Sep. 1816) ("Review of *Christabel, Kubla Khan, a Vision*"); the *British Review* (vol. 8, no. 15, Aug. 1816) ("Review

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Based on the rather complicated publication history of *Christabel* and the private plagiarism controversy, one can infer four groups of readerships of Byron's annotation: (1) Coleridge himself, (2) Scott and Wordsworth, who did not publicly acknowledge their debts to *Christabel*, (3) readers moving in literary circles, who had already heard *Christabel* being recited before it was published and who would have been able to spot the parallels between Coleridge's poem and *The Siege of Corinth* was well as Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and Wordsworth's *The White Doe of Rylstone*, and (4) the general reading public, who had no knowledge of the existence of *Christabel* nor of the plagiarism controversy yet.

Byron, the 'Ethical' Author

With respect to Coleridge himself, the annotation constitutes a compliment and a (much-needed though eventually fruitless[149]) act of public support. Moreover, it may have served as atonement for the ridicule that Byron had showered on Coleridge in *EBSR*. Byron's praise of *Christabel* seems to have been sincere. In his letters to Moore and Murray (with both of whom he was usually very candid), written shortly after he had received the manuscript of *Christabel*, he calls Coleridge "a man of wonderful talent" and assures his publisher that he "think[s] most highly" of the poem (*BLJ* 4: 324; 331).[150]

Sincere as the compliment in the annotation may be, the very fact that it is a *public* compliment – and thereby directed at various readerships besides Coleridge – suggests that it is far from selfless. First of all, by insisting that the textual similarities are unintentional, Byron uses the annotation to emphasise his own originality. More importantly, the note serves Byron's self-presentation as a generous patron of poor writers and as someone who abides

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of *Christabel – Kubla Khan, a Vision*"); the *Literary Panorama* (vol. 4, no. 22, July 1816) ("Review of *Christabel. Kubla Khan, a Vision. The Pains of Sleep*"); and the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (vol. 50, no. 218, July 1816) ("Review of *Christabel*").

149 Despite Byron's efforts, *Christabel* was a commercial and critical failure. A decade after its publication, Coleridge remarked that "[t]he Sale of the Christabel sadly disappointed Mr Murray. It was abused & ridiculed by the Edingburgh [sic] Review: & the Quarterly [Review] refused even to notice it" (S. T. Coleridge, *Coll. Letters* 5: 437).

150 At other times, of course, both before and after 1815, Byron was very ambivalent towards, or even dismissive of, Coleridge's talent. For instance, writing to James Hogg in 1814, Byron sharply criticised the Lake Poets: "I hate these talkers one and all, body and soul. They are a set of the most despicable impostors […]. They know nothing of the world[.] […] Look at their beastly vulgarity, when they wish to be homely; and their exquisite stuff, when they clap on sail, and aim at fancy. Coleridge is the best of the trio – but bad is the best. Southey should have been a parish-clerk, and Wordsworth a man-midwife – both in darkness. I doubt if either of them ever got drunk" (*BLJ* 4: 85).

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by professional ethics and acts honourably with regard to his fellow authors. While this aspect of the note is also to some extent directed at Coleridge, it is even more significant with respect to Scott and Wordsworth, to readers moving in literary circles, and to the general reading public.

With respect to Scott, Wordsworth, and literary insiders, the annotation is quite double-edged. It can be interpreted as either a defence or – more convincingly – as an indictment of the two other poets. On the one hand, the note affirms that not every literary parallel is the result of deliberate plagiarism. Just as the similarities between *Christabel* and *The Siege of Corinth* are coincidental, the resemblance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The White Doe of Rylstone* to Coleridge's poem may likewise be purely accidental. On the other hand, unlike Byron, Scott and Wordsworth had indeed read *Christabel* before composing their own poems – a fact that was known in literary circles. Byron's annotation thus implicitly criticises the other two authors: while the hugely successful Scott and even one of Coleridge's closest associates remain silent on their actual debts to *Christabel*, Byron (who could hardly be counted among Coleridge's friends) owns a similarity that indeed seems to have been accidental.[151] The general reading public, who did not know about Scott's and Wordsworth's unacknowledged uses of *Christabel* yet, would not have been aware of this veiled attack in the note. To everyone else, however, the annotation signals that Byron does what his two fellow writers *should* have done.

This self-presentation as an 'honourable' author is, of course, a bit disingenuous given that Byron does not acknowledge his own debts to Scott in the poem (see n 151 below). Hence, the note can to some extent be seen as one which carefully foregrounds and sets in scene Byron's authorial ethos. It can thus be interpreted as performative, which here both refers to performance as the genuine "accomplishment or carrying out of something" *and* as a false

151 Byron's sincerity in claiming that he had never heard or seen *Christabel* before composing the passage in question cannot be verified with absolute certainty, but most of the evidence confirms his statement. McGann's conjectures on the composition history of *The Siege of Corinth* endorse Byron's account. The watermark dates in the manuscripts, the physical condition of the manuscripts, and Byron's letters suggest that lines 474–563 were written as early as in autumn 1813, i.e. nearly two years before Byron heard Scott recite *Christabel* (cf. editor's n in *CPW* 3: 480). In his commentary on *The Siege of Corinth* in the posthumous *Works of Byron*, Thomas Moore provides a convincing explanation for the similarities between Byron's poem and *Christabel*: "the poet had never read 'Christabel' at the time when he wrote those lines; – he had, however, [read] the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel'" (T. Moore, *Works of Byron* 10: 105–06). In other words, Scott had been inspired by Coleridge and Byron by Scott. Given his implicit criticism of Scott for using *Christabel* without acknowledgement, it is a bit ironic that Byron does not admit his debt to Scott anywhere in *The Siege of Corinth*.

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"pretence" or "sham" (*OED* "performance, *n.*" def. 1.a; def. 4.c.). Byron's self-presentation as 'ethical' author is ambiguous; it is neither entirely honest (or selfless), nor entirely insincere.[152]

Covert Advertising à la Byron

Byron's annotation pretends that in February 1816 Coleridge was still undecided whether or not he should publish *Christabel* and expresses the "hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges". This comment strives to excite the general reading public's curiosity for a mysterious work that apparently all literary grandees of the day admired and that everyone except themselves had seen by this time. If they wanted to know what all the excitement was about, they had to pray that Coleridge would one day make his poem available to 'ordinary' readers – at least this is what the annotation appears to suggest.

What the note does not mention is that, of course, the publication of *Christabel* was a 'done deal' by then, and that the forthcoming poem happened to be sold by Byron's own publisher, who, naturally, had a vested interest in its success. Thus, the note's ostensible 'encouragement' to Coleridge to finally publish his work was, in reality, a marketing ploy. As Nicholas Mason points out, John Murray – shrewd businessman that he was – understood that

> publicity is much more effective than direct advertising for establishing a brand name. In an age when advertising columns were increasingly crowded, simply running a series of conventional advertisements did little to get a product noticed. (Mason 426)

It was probably no coincidence that the letter in which Byron asked Murray to publish *Christabel* and the letter in which he told Murray that he would include a note on *Christabel* in his next poem were sent on the same day. If Byron wanted to convince Murray to act as the publisher of *Christabel*, he also had to assure him that he would do his best to make people buy it. Critics soon noticed the role that Byron had played in securing readers (and, more importantly, buyers) for *Christabel*. In its article on *Christabel*, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (vol. 50, no. 218, July 1816) even remarks that the poem has

> been ushered into the world by a new species of *puff direct*; under the auspices of Lord Byron, who, as the newspapers informed the public, had read them in

152 For the 'truth' of performance, see Zirker, *William Shakespeare and John Donne* 12. For the concept of performance, in general, see Fischer-Lichte 29–37.

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> manuscript, and, in a letter to the author [sic], had called Christabel, it seems, a '*singularly wild and beautiful Poem*.' The artifice has succeeded so far as to force it into a second edition! for what woman in fashion would not purchase a book recommended by Lord Byron? ("Review of *Christabel*" 632, original emphasis)

As shown above, this "artifice" relied on the fact that the general reading public was unaware that *Christabel* had been prepared and accepted for publication long before Byron's annotation first met their eyes. Byron hence used these readers' lack of insight into the publishing business in order to veil the partly commercial background of his note.

In summary, in this annotation the initiated readerships – Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, and readers moving in literary circles – are differentiated by their degree of personal involvement in the matters alluded to in the note and by the exact functions the annotation serves with respect to them. For instance, while readers belonging to the literary scene merely witness Byron's self-presentation and his implicit criticism of Scott and Wordsworth, these two authors are directly involved in the controversy. In both the case of covert advertisement and the indirect criticism of Scott and Wordsworth, the general reading public is *implicitly* excluded from part of the meaning of the annotation: the note does not publicly hint at the fact that one requires certain background knowledge in order to grasp the ulterior functions of the annotation. It leaves the general readership completely unaware that this knowledge exists and that the annotation serves purposes that may not at first sight be apparent to them. In the next example discussed here, the exclusion of certain readerships will be more explicit.

3.2.2.2 Personal and Literary Background Knowledge: Hodgson's Objection, de Staël's Eloquence, and a Lady's "speaking harmony"

While Byron's annotation on *Christabel* was purely concerned with the literary sphere, other annotated passages combine the literary and the personal. Such an example appears in *The Bride of Abydos* and depicts the female protagonist as follows:

> Such was Zuleika – such around her shone
> The nameless charms unmarked by her alone –
> The light of love – the purity of grace –
> The mind – the Music breathing from her face! (*Bride of Abydos* 1.176–79)

The arguably rather unusual expression "The mind – the Music breathing from her face", which combines a double metaphor and synaesthesia, is complemented by a lengthy annotation:

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> This expression has met with objections. I will not refer to "Him who hath not Music in his soul," but merely request the reader to recollect, for ten seconds, the features of the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful; and if he then does not comprehend fully what is feebly expressed in the above line, I shall be sorry for us both. For an eloquent passage in the latest work of the first female writer of this, perhaps of any age, on the analogy (and the immediate comparison excited by that analogy) between "painting and music," see vol. iii. cap. 10, "De L'Allemagne." And is not this connexion still stronger with the original than the copy? with the colouring of Nature than of Art? After all, this is rather to be felt than described; still, I think there are some who will understand it, at least they would have done had they beheld the countenance whose speaking harmony suggested the idea; for this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory, that mirror which Affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied. (*Bride of Abydos* 1.179n; *CPW* 3: 436–37)

As will be shown, this annotation differentiates between six partly overlapping readerships: (1) Byron's friend Francis Hodgson, who was most likely the one who had raised the objection,[153] (2) Madame de Staël, (3) the woman whose face probably "suggested the idea", (4) Byron's friends, especially those who knew about at least one of his flirts or affairs of 1813, (5) the general reading public, and, possibly, (6) those readers who remembered a certain passage in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*.

153 It is not entirely clear whether Hodgson was the one who had objected to the expression, but he is the most likely candidate. The annotation must have been written between 13 November (when the lines in question were first received by Murray as a corrected fair copy to be added to the poem) and 20 November 1813 (when Byron asked Murray to delete part of the note that he had sent him) (cf. *CPW* 3: 432; *BLJ* 3: 169). The manuscript of the annotation is not extant (cf. editor's n in Murray 50). Both the annotated lines and the (full) annotation were first printed in the proof of 21 November 1813 (cf. editor's n in Murray 50). (The full note was eventually published; Byron seems to have retracted his order to delete part of it.) Drafts of *The Bride of Abydos* were read by Hodgson, William Gifford (Murray's literary adviser), and Lord Holland (one of the foremost Whig politicians of the day) (cf. *BLJ* 3: 161; 166). Gifford, however, had received a proof of the poem on 12 November 1813, i.e. before the additional lines were even sent to Murray or inserted into the existing draft (cf. *BLJ* 3: 161). Thus, he cannot have been the one who objected to them. Besides, it is unlikely that Byron would have reacted this facetiously if the criticism had been voiced by Gifford, whom he called his "*literary* father" and whose opinion on literary matters he valued above everyone else's (*BLJ* 11: 117, original emphasis; cf. e.g. *BLJ* 5: 193). It is just as implausible that the irreverent retort is directed at Holland, to whom the poem is dedicated and with whom Byron tried his best to establish a friendly relationship after having satirised him in *EBSR*.

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Public Justifications and Private Jibes

The annotation starts out by reacting to an objection raised during the composition or revision process of the poem.[154] Instead of silently altering the expression or simply ignoring Hodgson's advice, Byron publicly justifies the line. This justification is directed at both Hodgson and any future reader who might likewise criticise the expression, and it is both a sincere defence and a good-humoured jibe. On the more facetious side, the annotation insinuates that everyone who objects to the line is simply not romantically inclined enough to understand it or has perhaps never seen a beautiful enough woman. In the case of Hodgson, this implication is especially piquant, given that Byron's friend had only recently become engaged (cf. *BLJ* 3: 206).

On the more serious side, the annotation justifies the expression by alluding to (and misquoting) a similar phrase in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*,[155] by invoking readers' personal experience, and by referring to de Staël's discussion of synaesthesia.[156] Thus, at least initially, the annotation

154 Other annotations in which Byron reacts to objections that his friends and advisers raised when reading the drafts of his poems include: (1) *Bride of Abydos* 2.204n, in which Byron counters Murray's argument that a Muslim character would not mention the names of Noah and Cain (*CPW* 3: 440; cf. also *BLJ* 3: 164–65), (2) *Lara* 1n, (a note written by Hobhouse at Byron's request) which explains that, even though Lara's name sounds Spanish, the poem is not set in Spain and that it is hence not incorrect to call Lara's subjects "serfs" despite the fact that serfdom never existed in Spain (*CPW* 3: 453; cf. also *BLJ* 4: 143–46), and (3) *Don Juan* 13.106n, where Byron prints one of his friend's manuscript comments criticising Byron's claim that "[n]o angler can be a good man" (*CPW* 5: 759).

155 The correct passage in Shakespeare reads "The man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils" (Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 5.1.82–84). It appears that the passage was often quoted incorrectly in Byron's age. For instance, in the entry for "Shakespeare" in Rees's *The Cyclopædia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, the line is introduced and misquoted as follows: "This is the initial of a well-known, and now *proverbial*, eulogium on modulated sound: 'The man that has no music in his soul,' etc." (Rees n.pag., original emphasis).

156 In the passage in *De l'Allemagne* to which Byron's note refers, de Staël not only discusses synaesthesia but also argues that the soul can be manifested or mirrored in external phenomena (I am quoting from the 1813 translation): "Why […] should not the supreme Intelligence, which formed nature and the soul, have made one the emblem of the other? There is no vain play of fancy in those continual metaphors which aid us in comparing our sentiments with external phænomena; sadness, with the clouded heaven […] – it is the same thought of our Creator, transfused into two different languages, and capable of reciprocal interpretation. […] The analogies between the different elements of external nature together constitute the chief law of the creation[.] […] For example, What is there more astonishing than the connexion [sic] between sounds and forms, and between sounds and colours? […] Sanderson, who was blind from his birth, said, that the colour of scarlet, in his idea, was like the sound of a trumpet […][.] We incessantly compare

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suggests that one's ability to understand and appreciate the expression primarily relies on one's life experience and, furthermore, on one's book knowledge. In the course of the annotation, however, Byron contradicts the initial argument that everyone who has seen a beautiful woman (or read the right books) can comprehend the line: "I think there are *some* who will understand it, at least *they would have done* had they beheld the countenance" (my emphasis). What began as a way of including all readers in the meaning-making of the passage suddenly becomes exclusive, suggesting that only those are able to comprehend the expression who have seen this *particular* woman.

This is not the only instance in which Byron's defence of the line gives the general reading public the impression of both being included and excluded. In the humorous reaction to Hodgson's criticism, they are seemingly allowed to overhear a private conversation between Byron and Hodgson and are able to partly infer which function this note serves with respect to the original objector. Nevertheless, they are also forced to realise their outsider status by not being able to discover this objector's identity. Furthermore, the very fact that the annotation reminds readers that the poem does not miraculously appear in print but that it passes through many hands before it is finally published both fosters and destroys the apparent intimacy between author and reader.[157] On the one hand, the general reading public is invited to look behind the scenes and to learn more about the composition process that would otherwise have remained hidden from them.[158] On the other hand, this look behind the scenes shows readers that the poem, even before it is published, is a collaborative, social, and commercial enterprise. It is by no means the personal and unmediated record of solitary musings and, therefore, does not necessarily give them privileged access to the feeling and ideas of an individual author.[159]

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painting to music; because the emotions we feel discover analogies where cold observation would only have seen differences" (de Staël, *Germany* 3: 150–52).

157 Yet another annotation that draws attention to the collaborative nature of writing appears in *Don Juan* and records that, in the proof of the poem, Byron and one of his friends fought over the weighty question whether an angler can be a good man (cf. *Don Juan* 13.106n; *CPW* 5: 759).

158 This can be compared to Andrew Elfenbein's argument that Byron's works in general give readers the chance to take a glimpse at a world that they were usually barred from. He allows them to "view and identify with a secret aristocratic space not ordinarily open to public view" (Elfenbein 52). Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that most works before *Don Juan* were sold at a prize that would have prevented middle- and lower-class readers from buying them in the first place, so that Byron's works were mainly read by his social equals (cf. St. Clair, "The Impact of Byron's Writings" 4; 7).

159 For the collaborative nature of Romantic writing, also see St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 183.

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Networking Among Literary Lions

The social aspect of the work becomes even more apparent in the compliment to de Staël. A review of *The Bride of Abydos* in the *Wiener Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (no. 26, Apr. 1814) even conjectures that the expression to which Hodgson objected was only included in the poem so that Byron could write a note on it and therein "make a polite bow" to the French writer (for the review, see p. 239 above). Even Princess Charlotte commented on the annotation and remarked:

> In one of his notes he pays Madame de Stael a very great compliment upon what she says in her *Allemagne* upon musick; & I confess that the note, *to me*, so fully expresses all I feel upon it, & is so elegantly turned, that it ought to be engraved on marble & on brass, that it may never be obliterated from the minds of the lovers of musick. (Charlotte Augusta of Wales 88–89, original emphasis)

Byron's description of de Staël as the "first female writer of this, perhaps of any age" is indeed a more or less genuine compliment directed at her. After she had written to Byron in order to thank him for the note,[160] he recorded in his journal: "I spoke as I thought. Her works are my delight, and so is she herself, for – half an hour" (*BLJ* 3: 227). The qualification "for half an hour", however, indicates that Byron's admiration for her was not as boundless as the annotation suggests. Even though he indeed held her works in high regard (despite sometimes poking fun at *Corinne*), he initially found her quite overbearing in person. In "Some Recollections of my Acquaintance with Madame de Staël" (written in 1821 and not published during his lifetime), Byron remembers their first meeting as follows:

> I saw the woman of whom I had heard marvels – she justified what I had heard – but she was still a mortal – and made long speeches – nay the very day of this philosophical feast in her honour – she made *very* long speeches to those who had been accustomed to hear such only in the two Houses – she interrupted Whitbread – she declaimed to Lord L[ansdowne] – She misunderstood Sheridan's jokes for assent – She harangued – she lectured – She preached English politics to the first of our English Whig politicians – the day after her arrival in England – and (if I am not much misinformed –) preached politics no less to our Tory politicians the day after.——The Sovereign himself – if I am not

160 She wrote (with a great dose of feigned humility): "I do not know how to express to you, my lord, how honoured I feel to be in a note to your poem, and in what a poem! For the first time it seems to me that I am certain to be remembered by posterity, and you have placed at my disposal that real of esteem which will be yours more and more every day" (de Staël, *Selected Corr.* 329).

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> in error was not exempt from this flow of Eloquence. (Byron, *CMP* 185, original emphasis)

Thus, Byron's praise of *De l'Allemagne* itself is sincere but veils his more ambivalent attitude towards its author, of which only Byron's friends would have known at this time.

In contrast to the note on Coleridge discussed above, the compliment here is not used as advertisement for the work mentioned in the annotation, though *De l'Allemagne* was likewise published by John Murray. De Staël was hardly in need of any further promotion for her book – her previous literary successes, her celebrated visit to England, and the destruction of almost the entire (yet unpublished) 1810 first edition of *De l'Allemagne* in France[161] provided sufficient publicity. When *De l'Allemagne* was finally published in 1813 (in London), it was sold out within three days; its English translation, which was likewise published by Murray at the same time, was equally successful (cf. Wilkes 5).

Thus, rather than being an advertising scheme, the annotation in *The Bride of Abydos* (published several months after *De l'Allemagne*) publicly acknowledges and fosters the connection between two of the most famous authors of the day. Of course, far from being selfless, the note benefits Byron's literary reputation just as much as de Staël's. It draws readers' attention to his "familiarity with the writings of Britain's current new literary celebrity" (Wilkes 68) and insists that he can 'bear a sister near the throne'.

The exact nature of the connection between the two lionised authors as it is depicted in this annotation, however, is left open to debate. Does the annotation express the deference of a young poet to an established author, portray a respectful professional relationship among equals, or rather condescendingly admit that – as Byron elsewhere ironically imagines his publisher saying – "for a woman / her talents surely were uncommon" (Byron, "Epistle from Mr. Murray to Dr. Polidori" 79–80)? Whatever its main tenor may be, the compliment to de Staël is the most 'transparent' part of the annotation with respect to the general reading public. They can easily grasp who it is directed at, and the passage does not signal to them that there might be any hidden meaning that they will never be able to uncover. The only difference between them and those readers who moved in Byron's circle is that the latter knew about his ambivalence towards de Staël as a person.

161 The first edition was destroyed at the behest of Napoleon before any copy could be sold. Only a handful of the 5000 copies of this edition survived (cf. Lonchamp no. 90). It was in the form of Murray's 1813 edition that *De l'Allemagne* met the public eye for the first time.

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Autobiographical Interpretation, Self-Presentation, and Global Ambiguity

Both the compliment to de Staël and the jibe at Hodgson contribute exclusively to the socio-pragmatic dimension of the annotation; they have almost no bearing on the meaning of the annotated passage nor even of the poem as a whole. Things lie differently in the last third of the annotation, which serves both socio-pragmatic and intratextual functions. Here, Byron informs readers that "this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory" and that there was a certain "countenance whose speaking harmony suggested the idea".

It is not clear who this passage refers to. The three most plausible candidates are Lady Oxford, with whom Byron had had an affair in 1813 and who had left England to travel with her husband; Lady Frances Webster, with whom he had almost had an affair in 1813; and Augusta Leigh, Byron's half-sister and, from 1813 onwards, (probably)[162] also his lover. Byron's involvement with Lady Oxford seems to have been known to several members of high society (even her husband was aware of it), but it is unclear who – apart from Byron's confidante Lady Melbourne – knew of the other two women. Lady Frances's husband might have suspected something, and it is likely that Byron made some allusions to his possible affair with Augusta Leigh to Thomas Moore (cf. *BLJ* 3: 96; 153).

The strategic underspecification of who is meant has, first of all, two rather practical reasons. For one, Byron could not explicitly name any of these married women (least of all his half-sister) without causing scandal. For another, this passage also serves as an example of 'poetic economy' in allowing Byron to compliment three (or perhaps even more) women at the same time.[163] With respect to them, the note is a means of teasingly fostering Byron's relationships: in each of these women, it strives to evoke a mix of (1) pride in being praised in this manner, (2) pleasure in being among the few readers who are able to decode the half-public, half-private message, (3) the thrill of being a participant in this risky game of self-revelation and self-concealment, and (4) compassion with 'poor Byron', whose writing of these lines is (allegedly) inspired by

162 For a recent discussion of the evidence for and against the possibility that Byron and Leigh had an incestuous relationship, see Rawes, "'That Perverse Passion'" 75–79. Regardless of what actually happened between the two (a matter that will probably never be resolved with final certainty), one must at least admit that Byron was quite fond of hinting at such a relationship, both in his private correspondence and his works.

163 Though it is unlikely that she is meant here, it is quite possible that Lady Caroline Lamb (and many others who knew of her rather public past affair with Byron) would have interpreted the lines as a reference to herself. For the connection between ambiguity and poetic economy, see Bross *passim*.

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"memory" and "Affliction".[164] For those very few readers who already suspected that Byron might have an affair with Augusta Leigh, the note also served an intratextual function. By suggesting that the depiction of Zuleika was possibly inspired by Byron's half-sister, the annotation emphasises the incest theme of the poem.[165]

With respect to the general reading public, the note's underspecification serves quite different aims. To everyone outside of Byron's closest circle of friends and lovers, the possible referent(s) of this passage would have been impossible to discover, with the exception of, perhaps, Lady Oxford, whose affair with Byron was not a particularly well-kept secret.[166] Thus, to an even greater extent than the allusion to Hodgson, this part of the annotation plays with the inclusion and exclusion of the general reading public – in this case meaning everyone who had no insight into the intricacies of Byron's 1813 love life. On the one hand, the section gives these readers the impression that Byron is baring his soul to them and that they have the privilege of eavesdropping on clandestine communication between him and his lover(s). On the other hand, by making it impossible to identify its main addressee(s), the passage reminds these readers of their status as outsiders who are not able to fully uncover Byron's alleged secrets. This strategy of teasing readers with partial revelations may be seen as one of the pillars of Byron's commercial success; it gave readers the impression that they simply *had* to buy the next publication in order to find more 'hints' that might bring them a bit nearer to solving the mystery he had cast about himself.[167]

The last section of this annotation also has two functions that are the same for all addressees, regardless of whether or not they could identify at least one of the women possibly addressed in it. For one, it serves to present Byron in one

164 It is very likely that Augusta Leigh would have been far from proud, pleased, or thrilled to read this allusion to their possible relationship. Throughout her life, she did her best to disclaim all rumours about the affair, e.g. forbidding Byron to publish the "Epistle to Augusta" in 1816.

165 In the draft, Selim and Zuleika were siblings; in the published version, they are cousins who initially believe themselves to be siblings.

166 Even Thomas Moore – one of Byron's closest friends – appears to have learnt about Byron and Augusta's possible relationship only after *The Bride of Abydos* had been published. Jeffery Vail surmises (based on their correspondence), that Byron hinted at it to Moore in May 1814, i.e. a few months after the publication (cf. Vail 144).

167 This teasing of readers with pieces of information that might or might not be supplied in later works or editions can be compared to Pope's strategy of deliberately withholding information in the 1728 *Dunciad* in order to create a greater demand for the heavily annotated 1729 *Dunciad* (see chapter 2.2.1 above).

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of his favourite roles (at least in works written between *CHP* and *Beppo*), i.e. that of the man who harbours dark secrets and suffers from memories that he cannot bring himself to fully articulate (see chapter 3.2.1 above). For another – and this is where the intratextual function of the note finally comes into play –, it suggests that Zuleika is by no means a fictional character but inspired by a real person. Elsewhere in *The Bride of Abydos*, there is not the least hint that the poem may be (partly) autobiographical. Hence, as argued in chapter 3.2.1 above, it is again only through annotation that the seemingly fictional poem is ambiguated and a potential autobiographical background is evoked.

Autobiographical Hint or Intertextual Allusion?

To make matters even more complicated, the annotation may – partly at least – also implicitly undermine its insistence on autobiography. The request to the reader to "recollect, for ten seconds, the features of the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful" bears some similarity to an annotation in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) – a novel greatly admired by Byron. The annotated passage in *Joseph Andrews* depicts the sunrise in the following terms: "That beautiful young Lady, the *Morning*, now rose from her Bed, and with a Countenance blooming with Fresh Youth and Sprightliness, like Miss—". The annotation for the blank only facetiously states "*Whoever the Reader pleases*" (Fielding 225n, original emphasis). As in *The Bride of Abydos*, the reader is here directly involved in the meaning-making of the passage; in Byron's poem, however, as we have seen, this involvement is later denied.

The possible allusion to Fielding thus raises the question whether Byron's annotation refers to the real-life model of Zuleika or to Fielding's mockery of readers who call for such identifications. The note can be seen as both supporting *and* ridiculing readers' insistence that many (if not all) characters in fictional texts are based on real-life models and that authors are obliged to name them. As in the examples discussed in chapter 3.2.1 above, the annotation hence simultaneously suggests and denies that Byron's works have an autobiographical background.

This note in *The Bride of Abydos* primarily resorts to the explicit differentiation of readerships. Those who are prevented from grasping the full background of the annotation and annotated passage are made fully aware of this fact. What makes the note especially complex, however, is that many of the mechanisms by which the note excludes the general reading public at the same time serve to partly form a closer bond between them and the author by suggesting that these readers are allowed to overhear Byron's 'private' conversations with his lover(s), friends, and literary associates.

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3.2.2.3 Cultural and Linguistic Background Knowledge: A 'Flash' Compliment to John 'Gentleman' Jackson

While the annotation on *Christabel* discussed above mainly distinguishes readers according to their insider knowledge of literary circles, the note on *The Bride of Abydos* primarily employs allusions to Byron's private life. In my last example, the differentiation of readerships relies on readers' proficiency in, or ignorance of, boxing slang, and on the contemporary cultural implications of (not) knowing this slang.

In the eleventh canto of *Don Juan*, the eponymous hero is forced to shoot a young robber in self-defence. After this incident, the narrator muses:

> He [Juan] from the world had cut off a great man,
> Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
> Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
> Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
> Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow–street's ban)
> On the high toby–spice so flash the muzzle?
> Who on a lark, with black–eyed Sal (his blowing)
> So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing? (*Don Juan* 11.19)

Even though the gist of the stanza becomes clear, i.e. that the robber Tom was involved in various illegal activities and had a girlfriend named Sal, the exact meaning of the lines remains obscure to readers who are not familiar with the slang terms used in this passage.[168] The annotation that is appended to the stanza appears, at first sight, to be of little help:

> The advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select mobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular, at least in my early days: –
>
> On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,
> In spite of each gallows old scout;
> If you at the spellken can't hustle,
> You'll be hobbled in making a Clout.

168 Gary Dyer paraphrases the stanza as follows: "Juan had removed from the world a great man, who in his day had made considerable commotion. Who could lead the thieves in attack in a fight, drink in the thieves' hideout, or steal at the theater as Tom could? Who could cheat a fool as well or rob on horseback despite the threat of constables? Who, when out with his girlfriend Sal, was so lusty, so well dressed, so devoted, and so clued in?" (Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 564).

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> Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty,
> When she hears of your scaly mistake,
> She'll surely turn snitch for the forty,
> That her Jack may be regular weight.
>
> If there be any Gemman so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism; who I trust still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments. (*Don Juan* 11.19n; *CPW* 5: 747)

Alice Levine quotes this as an example of a "failed note", which belongs to the "sub-genre of the mock-scholarly note" and invites "the reader to fill in the poem's blanks" (A. Levine 129). Implicitly, she thus evaluates the note according to the discourse conventions of xenographic annotations, which would, one might assume, call for a straightforward 'translation' of the stanza. However, in what follows, I will show why her reading of this note as a failed one falls short. In doing so, I will be following Gary Dyer's argument that the note is employed as a means of demarcating different readerships – a much more complex and intriguing use of the paratext than a straightforward explication of the slang terms would be (cf. Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 564; 574). The exact import of the words used in the stanza is much "less significant than the reader's need to translate"; in other words, it is not so important what the words mean but who is privy to their meaning (Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 564). In his article, Dyer mainly focuses on the idea that, by making explicit that there is something in the poem that many readers will not understand and by refusing to provide any help to them, the stanza and annotation may alert readers to the fact that the poem may also contain more inconspicuous passages that nevertheless require insider knowledge in order to be understood (e.g. passages alluding to homosexuality) (cf. Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 567). My own discussion of the annotation will be concerned with three aspects: (1) the question of social milieus that seems to be at the core of Byron's method of differentiating readerships here, (2) Byron's self-presentation, and (3) his strategy of subverting expectations of what (self-) annotations should do.

Differentiating Readerships Through Language

Like the annotation on the Hellespont discussed above, this note refuses to provide readers with scholarly facts and instead gives purely personal, anecdotal, and – in the present case – potentially incomprehensible information. In this, the note not only differs from the greatest majority of xenographic annotations

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but also from the self-annotations of most of Byron's contemporaries. For instance, Thomas Moore's *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress* and Pierce Egan's *Life in London* provided annotations that translated the many slang terms used in these works (cf. Dart 186; Coleman 156; 236). This may be a nice service to the uninitiated, but readers with insider knowledge are deprived of the pleasant experience of being able to grasp more than others and of discovering a common ground of understanding between themselves and the author. Byron, by contrast, occasionally leaves certain things unsaid so that his readers (or at least a part of them) could infer the meaning themselves. In some cases, he makes rather transparent allusions that every contemporary would have been able to decipher (see e.g. the annotation on Ney, chapter 3.3.4). In other cases, as in the present annotation, he pits different groups of readers against one another.

In order to understand how Byron's annotation differentiates between readerships, one has to reconstruct which social groups would have understood the slang terms used in the passage. The annotation claims that the language spoken in the stanza is "good and true English" and that the "advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate [it]". While the first statement is obviously ironic, the second contains more truth than one might initially suppose: the time around 1800 saw a considerable interest in 'flash language', i.e. the slang used by, among others, criminals. Francis Grose's *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785, rev. 1811) and John Badcock's *Slang*: *A Dictionary of the Turf, the Ring, the Chase, the Pit, Of Bon-Ton, and the Varieties of Life* (1823), for example, could provide the willing reader with a helpful guide to the language of the underworld (cf. Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 564; for other works of this kind, see Dyer 575n7). Most of the terms used in Byron's annotation and annotated passage are explained in Grose's and Badcock's dictionaries. Thus, for those readers who shared the contemporary interest in flash, the "advance of science" indeed rendered a straightforward translation of the stanza in the note unnecessary.[169]

What is even more important for understanding the annotation in its cultural context is the prevalence of flash in the boxing world and the latter's

169 Byron was not the first poet to use flash language in his works. For instance, his friend Tom Moore's poem *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress* is written in (boxing) flash. For lesser-known flash poems by Moore and others, see Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 575n9. For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precursors of slang literature, see Sorensen 27–105.

For the popularity of flash language in the Romantic age in general, also see Snowdon 35–70; Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 564–67; Dart *passim*; and Ford 158–57; 166–87.

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curious social makeup. As Jane Moore points out, boxing in Byron's day was not only "associated with low-life gambling and drinking dens" but also with the nobility (J. Moore 276). To illustrate the popularity of boxing in Romantic-era high society, a few examples may suffice. Apart from Byron and many of his friends,

> [t]he Prince of Wales [and] his brothers the Dukes of York and Clarence [...] were well-known aficionados. Indeed, the future George IV famously appointed eighteen of the foremost pugilists of the day [among them John Jackson] to act as ushers at Westminster Hall on his coronation day in July 1821. (J. Moore 276)

In 1814, Lord Lowther even organised two evenings of box fights for the amusement of, among others, the Emperor of Russia, Blücher, the King of Prussia, the Prince Royal of Prussia, Princes Frederick and William of Prussia, and the Prince of Mecklenburg (cf. Miles 100; 262–63; Ford 71). Furthermore, after his retirement as a boxer, John "Gentleman" Jackson (the "Professor of Pugilism" mentioned in the note) opened a boxing school for the aristocracy. The author of the 1841 *Fistiana* explains that "[h]ere all the *élite* of the fashionable world [...] were daily assembled; noblemen and gentlemen of the highest rank did not disdain to take the gloves" (Dowling 38, original emphasis). Another nineteenth-century description even remarks that "[n]ot to have had lessons of Jackson was a reproach. To attempt a list of his pupils would be to copy one-third of the then peerage" (Miles 97). As might be expected, Byron himself regularly took lessons at this school.[170]

The "fans and patrons of boxing" were called the 'Fancy' (Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 563). The flash language used by boxers and the Fancy was "a combination of sporting technicalities and cockney and underworld slang. [...] [It] could quickly be learnt by anyone interested enough in their pursuits" and was used in several books and journals concerned with the sport (Ford 158). The annotation thus had three kinds of initiated readerships: (1) the original, lower-class users of flash language; (2) members of the upper class who picked up the slang by attending prize fights, boxing schools, and sometimes also less reputable establishments like seedy pubs or gambling dens; and (3) readers who had a general interest in flash language. These readerships would not have needed a translation in order to grasp the meaning of Byron's

170 Byron was also friends with Tom Cribb, another of the foremost boxers of the age (cf. *BLJ* 3: 221). Furthermore, while he was at Cambridge, Byron organised an illegal boxing match between the professional boxers Tom Belcher and Dan Dogherty. The fight was interrupted by the magistrates, who subsequently arrested the fighters (cf. Hobhouse, *Byron's Bulldog* 32; Dyer, "Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets" 566).

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stanza and note. The *uninitiated* readership was composed of the majority of middle-class readers, among whom there was considerable opposition to boxing, especially by "[i]ntellectuals, radicals, conservative moralists, Evangelicals, and a good portion of the Dissenting community" (J. Moore 276).[171]

Publicly Forging and Severing Bonds

Due to the Romantic-era interest in slang and the many publications written partly or entirely in boxing flash, most contemporary readers would have been able to easily identify the kind of language used in the stanza and annotation. They also knew who understood this language and who did not, which means that the different groups of readers would have been aware of each other. What is more, even though the note relies on coded language and the inclusion of some and the exclusion of other readers, each readership would have known which functions the annotation serves with respect to the other readerships. Unlike the two annotations discussed above, this one is hence rather transparent about its different readerships as well as the various meanings it has for each of them.

To high-society readers who were part of the Fancy, the annotation was a knowing nod from one upper-class insider to others. They were able to both understand the slang expressions and to poke fun at their vulgarity. Members of this social group had been the main purchasers of Byron's poems for a long time – most other readers could simply not afford them (cf. St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 201). Byron's implicit reminder in this passage that he belongs to this class is nothing extraordinary – one can find such reminders throughout his works (e.g. in "Lachin Y Gair", see chapter 3.4.1). However, in most of these cases, he goes about quite straightforwardly (e.g. by providing information on his ancestry), whereas here he employs a much more creative (and less pretentious) method. He facetiously uses one of the (linguistically speaking) 'lowest' passages of *Don Juan* to remind his readers that he used to move among the uppermost echelons of British society. (See below for the special role that the reference to John "Gentleman" Jackson plays in this strategy).

The second group who was part of the initiated, privileged readership that could understand the stanza and the note were the original users of flash language, i.e. the lower-class "mobility" in general and boxers and criminals in

171 However, boxing also had some supporters among "middle-class citizens who had made their money in manufacture and trade" (Brailsford, *Bareknuckles* 25). Nevertheless, these were far outnumbered by both those above and below them on the social scale (cf. Brailsford, "Morals and Maulers" 134).

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particular.[172] Unlike Byron's forbiddingly expensive earlier works, the many volumes of *Don Juan* (either as pirate copies or – after John Hunt became Byron's new publisher – as cheap authorised copies) were extremely popular among the lower classes. William St. Clair explains that "*Don Juan*, even in its official [i.e. non-pirated] form, was by far the biggest seller of any contemporary literary work during the romantic period" (St. Clair, *The Reading Nation* 333). He estimates that

> [w]ithin a decade *Don Juan* had penetrated far deeper into the reading of the nation than any other modern book, with the possible exception of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* [...]. The poem was read, in part at least, by many thousands who did not read any of Byron's other works, and it was probably read by thousands who read no other book of any kind except the Bible. (St. Clair, "The Impact of Byron's Writings" 18)

Of course, not everyone among these thousands of lower-class readers would have used flash language in everyday communication. Nevertheless, it is likely that the passage gave at least of a portion of them the opportunity to witness (and understand) the most famous poet of the age suddenly using slang expressions they were familiar with. Though the note good-humouredly teases the original users of flash language, it also establishes a common ground of understanding and a special bond with this new part of Byron's readership. A similar sense of unity and mutual understanding is established with regard to the third initiated group, i.e. those readers who had a general linguistic interest in flash language, without necessarily ever using it in actual communication.

As far as the uninitiated group of readers – the respectable middle-class "Gemmen" – is concerned, it is questionable how many of them read *Don Juan* (especially the later cantos published by Hunt) in the first place. For those who did, the annotator's assertion that it is unnecessary to translate the slang terms is, of course, clearly ironical. Hence, contrary to what the note at first sight seems to suggest, the main butt of its joke are not lower-class speakers, criminals, or boxers who would use such terminology but the respectable middle classes – those who are neither members of the "select mobility" nor of their noble "patrons" and who try to put a barrier between themselves and lower-class language. It is these readers who, given their unfamiliarity with boxing and flash, require a translation of the slang terms and these readers to whom the note refuses elucidation. By more or less explicitly barring this potential part of his readership from fully understanding the passage and note, Byron

172 The *OED* defines "mobility" (being a play on the term "nobility") as "[t]he mob, the rabble; the common people; the working classes" ("mobility, *n.2*.").

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forges a closer relationship with those readers who *do* comprehend it. The Hermeneutic of Intimacy – the "communications between intimates" – that Byron appears to create both with his upper- and lower-class readers – is thus to some extent achieved by excluding part of his middle-class audience from this intimacy (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 24).

From Compliment to Self-Presentation

The first four readerships of the annotation are distinguished on the basis of their social status and their ability to understand flash terms without help. The last reader at whom this annotation is directed is differentiated from the others on account of his personal acquaintance with the author and the direct reference to him in the note: Byron's "corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism". As the annotation suggests, he was indeed an "old friend". Byron first met Jackson in 1806 and, at least until the end of 1814, regularly took boxing lessons with him (cf. Gross 145).[173] When Byron spent the summer of 1808 at Brighton, Jackson visited him several times and, in the same year, Byron even invited him to spend Christmas at Newstead Abbey (cf. Gross 147–48). In his letters (always familiarly addressing him as "dear Jack"), Byron occasionally called on Jackson's assistance in buying dogs and weapons as well as in intimidating deceitful business partners (cf. Gross 147–48).

Byron's sudden change from humorously showing off his proficiency in flash language towards affectionately praising Jackson is indicated by the style of the annotation which shifts from facetious to amicable, from slang to standard English. The compliment to Jackson in the annotation is both a private token of genuine friendship and a public *enactment* of this friendship for the other four groups of addressees. As in Byron's compliments to Coleridge and de Staël, his praise of Jackson is not entirely selfless. Just as Jackson's reputation could gain by him being associated with one of the most successful authors of the day, Byron could likewise polish his image by reminding readers of his friendship with the boxer who was the darling of high society. Jackson's epithet "Gentleman" was not applied to him ironically. He had an "unusually prosperous background for a pugilist" because his father owned a "thriving building business" (Brailsford, *Bareknuckles* 68). Pierce Egan's *Boxiana* (1823) describes him as "one of the best behaved men" of the kingdom and someone who "acquired proficiency in his manners and address. He has let no opportunity slip whereby he might obtain knowledge and improvement"

173 In April 1814, for example, Byron noted that he had been sparring "with Jackson for this last month daily" (*BLJ* 4: 91).

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(P. Egan 287–88).[174] By reminding readers that it was partly from Jackson and not from any obscure, low-life pugilist that he learnt flash language, Byron again affirms his own belonging to high society.

By contrast, the song quoted in the annotation is not concerned with the at least half-respectable world of boxing but rather with the criminal underworld. While the greatest part of the note associates Byron with the gentlemanly Fancy, this song serves his self-presentation as a daredevil and rogue, who is not averse to spending his time in dubious company. Similar strategies can also be observed in other annotations in which he is eager to remind readers that he, among other things, passed several nights at the house of a (retired) Albanian robber (cf. *Bride of Abydos* 2.150n; *CPW* 3: 440) and spent a considerable part of his youth in low-life gambling dens (cf. *Don Juan* 11.29n; *CPW* 5: 748, see chapter 3.2.1.3). The note hence serves to present Byron in one of his favourite roles – that of the adventurous aristocratic man of the world rather than that of the poet or scribbler.[175] Furthermore, by stressing his ties to both the Fancy and to the criminal underworld, the note gives testimony to the authenticity of Byron's use of flash language.[176] Here, as in many of his annotations about Spanish, Portuguese, Swiss, Italian, Albanian, Turkish, or Greek culture, Byron is eager to point out the 'correctness' and verisimilitude of his poetry which he (allegedly) derived from lived experience, not from books (cf. *BLJ* 3: 165). Thus, even though the note is primarily concerned with sociopragmatic functions, it also serves the intratextual purpose of supporting and authenticating the annotated passage.

With respect to its strategy of differentiating readerships, Byron's flash annotation is the most transparent among the notes discussed in this chapter. The annotation on *The Siege of Corinth* discussed above completely veils the

174 Dennis Brailsford likewise describes Jackson as someone who had "won the highest regard from pugilists and peers alike, was looked upon as a model of honesty and was accepted as the final authority on all matters pugilistic" (Brailsford, *Bareknuckles* 68).

175 For example, he claims that "no one should be a rhymer who could be any thing better" (*BLJ*: 3: 217), and stresses: "I do think the preference of *writers* to *agents* – the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes, by themselves and others – a sign of effeminacy, degeneracy, and weakness. Who would write who had anything better to do? 'Action – action – action' – said Demosthenes: 'Actions – actions,' I say, and not writing, – least of all rhyme" (*BLJ* 3: 220, original emphasis). Also see *BLJ* 4: 183 and *BLJ* 5: 177.

176 The authenticity of the song quoted in the annotation cannot be ascertained. I could not find the stanzas printed anywhere before *Don Juan*. In his edition of the eleventh canto of *Don Juan*, Cochran argues that "the authenticity of this lyric is clear from its appearance in 1828 in *The Finish of the Adventures of Tom, Jerry, and Logic*, sequel to *London Life* by Pierce Egan" (Cochran (ed.), *Don Juan Canto 11* 13n46). However, it is just as likely that Egan took the lines from Byron's note rather than from any real-life model.

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fact that there is certain background knowledge that one needs in order to fully understand the note, while the annotation on *The Bride of Abydos* hints at secrets which the general reading public can never uncover. In the present case, however, the note refers to pieces of background information that uninitiated readers can, theoretically, quite easily obtain by resorting to a slang dictionary. Furthermore, all readerships of this annotation are aware of one another and of the functions that the note serves with regard to the other readerships. Lastly, the use of flash language and the refusal to translate it make the exclusion of one group of readers – the middle-class 'Gemmen' – very explicit.

Conclusion

Many approaches to Byron's works argue that he gives every single reader the impression that he is speaking to them (and *only* to them) directly, and that they are the only ones who can fully understand him. For instance, in its article on the fourth canto of *CHP*, the *Edinburgh Review* (June 1818, vol. 30, iss. 59) argues that in Byron's works there seems to be something

> of the nature of private and confidential communications. They are not felt, while we read, as declarations published to the world, – but almost as secrets whispered to chosen ears. Who is there that feels, for a moment, that the voice which reaches the inmost recesses of his heart is speaking to the careless multitudes around him? Or, if we do so remember, the words seem to pass by others like air, and to find their way to the hearts for whom they were intend, – kindred and sympathizing spirits, who discern and own that secret language, of which the privacy is not violated, though spoken in hearing of the uninitiated, – because it is not understood. […] There is felt to be between him and the public mind, a stronger personal bond than ever linked its movements to any other living poet. ("Review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV" 90; 93)

A similar argument also lies at the centre of Tom Mole's notion of the Hermeneutic of Intimacy (for the concept, see p. 251 above), which argues that Byron strategically created the impression that he "revealed himself in his poetry" and that his poems were "communications between intimates" (Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* 24).[177]

As the present chapter has shown, such accounts cannot fully do justice to the highly complex ways in which Byron interacted with his audiences.

177 Even though McGann stresses the presence of different (initiated and uninitiated) readerships in Byron's poems, he nevertheless also argues that "[i]n general, it is as if Byron in his work were not simply meditating in public, but were declaring or even declaiming his inmost thoughts and feelings out loud, and directly to others" (McGann, "Private Poetry, Public Deception" 117–18).

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Paradoxically, what makes the communication in Byron's works often feel so intimate is the very fact that they exclude certain readerships. By signalling (either in the poem itself or in the annotations) that part of the message is *not* directed at, and comprehensible to, each and every reader, the works create a sense of privileged intimacy with those readers who can grasp the veiled meaning and gives uninitiated readers the impression that they are being allowed to eavesdrop on clandestine communication. Part of the appeal of Byron's works to the general, uninitiated reading public was *not* that he straightforwardly revealed any secrets to them but that they seemingly overheard him convey these secrets to the "knowing ones", as he liked to call them. For the greatest majority of readers, Byron's works were not characterised by the revelatory but by the tantalisingly half-revelatory. The works were rendered ambiguous. They contain the public *enactment* of private communication, situated somewhere between autobiography and pose. To achieve a sense of intimacy with the general readership, Byron thus made explicit that he was withholding certain pieces of information from them, which, however, partly destroyed this very intimacy again. Hence, the ambiguity of such annotations lies not only in the fact that they have different meanings for different readerships and that they seem to be both private and public but also in the fact that they serve two contradictory functions with respect to one and the same audience: they both forge and sever a bond with the general reading public.

As outlined above, there were also cases in which Byron completely veiled the fact that he was conveying further meanings to a group of insiders (e.g. in the annotation about Coleridge's *Christabel*). In these instances, the sense of community and intimacy was, of course, only created with respect to the initiated readers; the uninitiated remained oblivious of the fact that the passage even had a further import and readership(s).

Forging (or severing) a bond with certain readerships was, of course, not the only purpose that these annotations served. As we have seen, functions could range from covert advertising to teasing friends, but the two most important ones were the interconnected functions of self-presentation and social networking. Byron depicts himself as a man who knows classical Greek as well as modern flash, who moves in the highest and lowest circles, who has seen everything from the plains of Troy to the gambling dens of St. James's. This combination of very disparate fields of knowledge, experience, and social circles sets Byron apart from virtually all other poets of his time and also from the greatest majority of readers. The annotations further flaunt Byron's (alleged) exceptionality by creating an air of mystery around him and by feeding into his continuous game of self-revelation and self-concealment, teasing the reading public with the possible disclosure of insider information but never making

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good on that promise. The annotations' frequent references to Byron's friends and acquaintances also make explicit that his works do not exist in a vacuum but are informed by political, social, legal, and commercial considerations, and involve various 'stakeholders' besides poet, publisher, "gentle reader! and / Still gentler purchaser!" (*Don Juan* 1.221; cf. McGann, "Byron and 'the Truth in Masquerade'" 195). They remind readers that these works had real-life repercussions. A compliment in them could make and a taunt could break another's career; they could get the printer arrested, make the publisher rich enough to move to Albemarle Street, and immortalise friends (and enemies) in print.[178] Through such social networking annotations, Byron could oblige his acquaintances[179] and, at the same time, serve his self-presentation as grateful friend, generous patron, adventurous rake, and member of high society.

178 A letter from Murray to Byron about Francis Cohen (later Sir Francis Palgrave), who had translated part of the Italian appendix in *Marino Faliero*, illustrates the social (and commercial) implications of the paratexts. Murray tells Byron: "You would [make] Cohen very happy & confer a great favour upon him if you would mention him in the preface – he is preparing a Work for the press & a notice of him from you would much serve him by bringing his name before the public" (Murray 364). It is unknown which of Cohen's works this refers to; he "published no work under his own name at this time" (editor's n in Murray 366). Possibly Murray "had in mind the report Cohen was preparing for negotiating the publication of the Public Records, of which he was soon to become the editor" (editor's n in Murray 366).

179 In two cases, Byron's attempts at social networking in his paratexts did more harm than good. Both of them occur in *Marino Faliero*. Firstly, in his preface, he deprecates the current state of the theatre but then qualifies this statement, arguing that "surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and [Henry Hart] Milman, and John Wilson exist" (*Marino Faliero* Pref. ll. 181–183; *CPW* 4: 305). Byron then proceeds to praise some of their works. This compliment to contemporary dramatists did not sit well with Byron's Harrow schoolfellow Barry Procter, who complained to Thomas Medwin "that he had been jeered on [his] 'The Duke of Mirandola' not having been included in [Byron's] enumeration of the dramatic pieces of the day" (Medwin 124). Byron wrote a letter of apology to Procter, assuring him that had he been aware of his tragedy, he "should certainly *not* have omitted to insert [Procter's] name with those of other writers who still do honour to the drama" (*BLJ* 9: 83–84, original emphasis).

Secondly, in Appendix 5, Byron laments the desolate state of Venice, before going on to argue that "from the present decay and degeneracy of Venice under the Barbarians [i.e. Austrians], there are some honourable individual exceptions" (*Marino Faliero* App. 5; *CPW* 4: 542). He proceeds to compliment various of his friends and acquaintances, among them "Vittor Benzon, the son of the celebrated beauty, the heroine of 'La Biondina in Gondoletta', […] and, not least in an Englishman's estimation, Madame Michelli, the translator of Shakspeare […], and Giuseppe Albrizzi, the accomplished son of an accomplished mother" (ibid.). However, as Byron's friend Richard Belgrave Hoppner informed him, the three *contesse* mentioned in this passage – Maria Querini Benzoni, Giustina Michele, and Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi – were not content with Byron's praise of them: "This note you must know has been the general subject of conversation […], and none of

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Annotations of the kind that was discussed in this chapter often work by creatively subverting the genre conventions of xenographic annotation. They openly violate the principles of straightforwardness and of being directly relevant to an elucidation of the annotated passage. They veil pieces of knowledge from most readers or explicitly refuse to explain while openly teasing the poet's audience with the information they will not disclose. They are usually extremely digressive and are primarily concerned with socio-pragmatic rather than intratextual functions. As places of social networking, they appropriate the function of other paratexts – dedications and acknowledgments – but often ingeniously deviate from the rather conventionalised expressions of gratitude that are usually found in these paratexts.

3.3 Mimicking Manuscript Comments in Byron: The Printer's Devil 'Corrects' the Text

In contrast to Pope, who attributes many of his annotations to other (real or fictional) people, Byron uses only two fictional annotator personas throughout his works: the irreverent European 'editor' of *The Giaour* (who may or may not be identified with Byron himself, see chapter 3.2.1.2 above) and the printer's devil who appears four times in *The Waltz, Beppo*, and *Don Juan*. In the four latter cases, Byron presents his own (printed) notes as manuscript comments written by the printer's apprentice or errand boy. These notes hence constitute a special case of self-annotation: they do not mimic printed xenographic annotations that would appear in a published scholarly edition but rather imitate handwritten comments inserted in a manuscript or proof during the composition and publication process.

Given readers' basic knowledge about book publishing (i.e. that such handwritten comments would not be reproduced in the published version of a work), they are, of course, able to grasp that Byron rather than the real printer's apprentice is the author of these notes. However, they are also able to temporarily suspend their disbelief to focus on the alleged dialogue between the

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the three good ladies of whom you speak are perfectly satisfied because in fact each of them thinks you ought to have spoken of her alone. Poor Benzoni however was the most [satisfied] notwithstanding her hatred of the Albrizzi, until the malicious little Michaeli put it into her head that you ought to have celebrated her wit and amiability as her beauty was sufficiently notorious" (Cochran and Curtis (eds.) 71). For Byron's facetious answer, see *BLJ* 8: 130–31. It should be noted that these two examples prove yet again – despite Cobbett's assertion to the contrary – that annotations and other paratexts were indeed avidly read and discussed by Byron's contemporaries (for Cobbett, see p. 236 above).

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apprentice as the 'writer' of the note and the speaker (and/or the author) of the poem.

Though three of the four notes signed by the printer's devil in Byron's œuvre claim that the main text contains a factual or typographical error, the ambiguity of whether it is the annotation or the poem that is correct remains in the background. Rather, this ambiguity is used as a means to an end: what is at stake in these cases is not the 'correctness' of the annotated passage but the satirical, ironical, or political elements that the 'rectifying' annotation can add to the main text.

As I will show, in the three works in which Byron uses the printer's devil as an annotator, this persona performs quite different functions. In *The Waltz*, the devil's note allows factual contradictions to remain unresolved within the poem and adds a remark that wavers (on Byron's side, not the devil's) between irony and self-irony as well as attack and self-defence. In *Beppo*, the annotation is used to create a 'milder' form of Romantic irony by pitting two different voices against each other instead of having one and the same voice undermine itself. And in *Don Juan*, Byron employs the printer's devil's notes to explain his own jokes without detracting from their humour and, in the case of one of the notes, as an extremely efficient way of activating his readers' background knowledge.

Before discussing Byron's literary use of the printer's devil in detail, I will briefly explain what *real* printer's devils did and why this made them perfect annotator personas. I will also provide a short overview of earlier examples of the printer's devil as 'annotator' in order to show to what extent Byron's use of the printer's devil is indebted to a literary convention and to what extent he also creatively transforms and expands this convention.

3.3.1 *The Real Printer's Devil: Corrector or Mere Errand Boy?*

What exactly is the joke behind using the printer's devil as an annotatorial figure? Was it because printer's devils had, in reality, no right to correct the text and were mainly employed for menial tasks? In this case, Byron's notes would derive their humour from the fact that a young, naive, and most likely error-prone worker is depicted as forgetting his place and raising important questions about the meaning of certain passages, while also 'correcting' one of the era's most successful poets. Or was it because (sensible as well as nonsensical) objections and corrections by the printer's devil were all-too-real and something that most authors had experienced at some point of their career? In other words, are the notes funny because they conjure up a completely unrealistic scenario or because they mimic actual notes by printer's devils that authors would sometimes find in their manuscripts and proofs? Evidence on

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this issue is quite inconclusive and contradictory, but a closer look at the function and reputation of the actual printer's devil shows why this character lends itself well to being turned into an 'annotator'.

The printer's devil was, first of all, the lowliest worker in a printer's office. The *OED* defines him as a "young assistant (sometimes the youngest apprentice) in a printing office" ("devil, *n*." def. 8.a.). John Johnson in his *Typographia: Or, The Printers' Instructor* (1824) explains that the printer's devil is the "Errand-Boy of a Printing-house" (J. Johnson 653; cf. also Hansard 925). According to William Savage's *A Dictionary of the Art of Printing* (1841), the devils "make the fires, sweep the rooms, assist in the warehouse, and go on errands" (Savage 196), and a certain 'W. B.' in *A Familiar Letter to Sam Foote* (ca. 1770) explains that their business "consists in carrying Proof-Sheets to Authors and Correctors, and waiting on Compositors and Press-men" (W. B. 6). It appears by this that proof-reading was usually carried out by a corrector (sometimes also called 'reader'), who was by far superior to the printer's devil: "No proof-sheet […] ought to be put to press, until it has been carefully read and revised by an *experienced* Reader" (Hansard 749, original emphasis).[180] Similarly, Johann Caspar Müller in his *Wohlmeynender Unterricht bey der Unterweisung eines Setzer- und Drucker-Knabens* (1740) advises that a corrector should revise everything himself and not entrust the reading of the proofs to the apprentice boys (cf. Müller 111). However, Robert Bisset, in his novel *Modern Literature* (1804), also presents the printer's devil as an aspiring professional rather than a mere errand boy:

> He takes up one of two courses, or both, aspires at being a compositor, or a reader [i.e. editor/corrector]. In such occupations, if tolerably sharp, he acquires a much better education than many professed men of letters; he becomes acquainted with spelling, and even receives an insight into higher parts of grammar[.] (Bisset 152)

It also appears that printer's devils were sometimes in charge of setting the types. Ridiculing the so-called Cockney school, John Gibson Lockhart claims that "they know no more about the spirit of these divine beings, than the poor printer's devils, whose fingers are wearied with setting together the types" (Lockhart, *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk* 2: 223). Some texts even explicitly link printer's devils to proof-reading. In his study of eighteenth-century newspaper printing offices, Karl Tilman Winkler observes:

180 For correctors' tasks and social status prior to the Romantic age, see Grafton, *The Culture of Correction* and Grafton, *Inky Fingers* 29–55.

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> Die Lehrjungen lasen auch Korrektur, ohne jedoch die Satzform zu verbessern. […] [Die Lehrlinge nahmen] häufig die Funktion von Springern wahr, die, soweit es ihr bereits erlerntes Können und die gewonnene Fertigkeit erlaubten, immer da eingesetzt wurden, wo der routinemäßige Ablauf es erforderte. (K. T. Winkler 128–29)[181]

Furthermore, a review in *The London Literary Gazette* (no. 350, 4 Oct. 1823) – after complaining about the number of typographical errors in a book – argues that the reviewed work is "a sore warning against […] publishing without a printer's devil to correct the errors of the manuscript" ("A Visit to Milan" 631). Likewise, the preface to the anonymously published satire *The Churchiliad* (1761) depicts a printer's devil who

> takes the liberty to look over my [the author's] shoulder. Now this, without any breach of decorum, may be allow'd; for we very often take the liberty, to leave the spelling and pointing of a whole piece to these *Midwives of the muses*, as Mr. [Samuel] Foote [in *The Author, a Comedy*] calls them. (*The Churchiliad* iv–v, original emphasis)[182]

In his review of William Henry Ireland's poem *Neglected Genius* in the *Monthly Review* (vol. 70, Feb. 1813), Byron himself also associates the printer's devil with proof-reading. After having ridiculed Ireland for calling Horace Walpole "Sir Horace" in his notes, Byron wonders "at the malicious fun of the printer's devil in permitting it to stand, for *he* certainly knew better" (Byron, "Review of *Neglected Genius*" 205, original emphasis). Murray's remark to Byron about Jane Waldie's *Sketches Descriptive of Italy in the Years 1816 and 1817* also suggests that printer's devils were the go-to address for making sense of authors' manuscripts: "she sent the MSS written in so cursed a hand that neither I nor any other person could decypher it […] [I sent] it to the printers [sic] Devil – […] he made it out" (Murray 344). Furthermore, in his *Modern Dunciad* (1814), George Daniel facetiously suggests that authors blame the devils for their own errors: "SIR JOHN's own bulls were – errors of the press; / And lest upon his back the rod should fall, / The printer's devils were to blame for all" (Daniel 46).

181 "The apprentices were also employed in proof-reading but without correcting the press. […] [The apprentices] often worked as floaters, who, provided they had already developed the required abilities, were employed wherever the usual workflow made it necessary" (my translation). Percy Simpson in *Proof-Reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* also mentions a William Smellie whom his firm employed as a corrector while he was still an apprentice (cf. P. Simpson 160–61).

182 Printer's devils seem to have been a byword for curiosity: the author of the anonymous *Memoirs of a Printer's Devil* (1793) explains that "we Printer's Devils have a strong propensity to peep into other men's Works" (*Memoirs of a Printer's Devil* 2).

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One last remark (though not explicitly mentioning printer's devils) is perhaps the most illuminating with respect to Byron's use of this persona as an annotator: when advising correctors on what to do when they notice a mistake in an author's manuscript, Henry Morgan's *A Dictionary of Terms Used in Printing* (1863) explains:

> although no corrector of the press can be required to do more than *follow his copy*, that is faithfully adhere to the original, yet he should point out such imperfections or mistakes by underlining the faulty sentence, and marking "query" (?) in the margin, thus drawing the author's attentions to the part, and removing the responsibility from himself. (Morgan 115, original emphasis)

Such "queries" are found in two of Byron's annotations ascribed to the printer's devil.

This brief overview of the rather contradictory information that we receive on printer's devils paints them as young, inexperienced, lowly workers who were nevertheless often employed as correctors and who some works (*Churchiliad* and *Memoirs of a Printer's Devil*) characterise as curious and even a bit impish.[183] All of these features make them perfect models for a naive, inquisitive, and sometimes slightly mischievous annotator persona who prides himself on detecting errors (or ironically pretending to detect errors?) in his author's texts.

3.3.2 *The Printer's Devil as 'Annotator' – A Brief History*

The connection between errors in a text and the devil (in this case: the real one, not the printer's) had already been established by the fifteenth century. Medieval scribes "disclaimed responsibility for the errors in the manuscripts they had to rush to produce" and instead blamed the devil *Titivillus*, who, they claimed, "had tempted them to err" (Drogin 18–19).[184] However, it is unclear whether writers around 1800 were aware of this tradition since, after the

183 It is possible that the contradictory accounts of the tasks that printer's devils performed is due to the fact that some printing offices allowed their devils to take on more responsible jobs than other offices and also soon promoted them to 'readers' and 'correctors' (cf. Grafton, personal communication, 12 March 2021).

184 For an extensive history of Titivillus (also sometimes spelled Tutivillus) see Margaret Jennings's *Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon*. The name of Tutivillus was first recorded in 1285 (cf. Jennings 16–17); at this time, he was not responsible for scribal errors but recorded "the idle words of churchgoers" and the "omitted or skimmed-over syllables from the carelessly recited prayers of the religious" (Jennings 10–11). I am grateful to Wolfgang Forster for drawing my attention to the notion of Titivillus.

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dawning of the Renaissance, the concept of Titivillus was soon forgotten (cf. Drogin 19).

The practice of having a fictional printer's devil sign annotations seems to have begun in the 1780s; the earliest example I could find appears in John Almon's satiric poem "A Familiar Epistle" published in 1785. The main text reads: "But shall I tell thee how I heard / A Bishop, with a sapient beard, / This folly [i.e. avarice] once deride?" (Almon 121). The annotation, while pretending to correct the annotated text, in fact introduces an attack against bishops:

> By your leave, Master Editor, here must be some mistake in this place. The doctrine you speak of, could not come from a Bishop: not because they are not contented with little; not because they are not unsolicitous of pomp and power; not because they are not wholly free from avarice, but because they none of them wear beards. *Printer's Devil.* (Almon 121n, original emphasis)

This ridicule of bishops, thinly disguised as a correction, is not at all connected to the subject matter of the poem, in which the speaker facetiously and good-humouredly urges an old friend to remember their youthful follies and get drunk with him to forget the sorrows of old age. The printer's devil's 'detection' of a mistake in the main text, hence, allows Almond to introduce a satirical digression (and, at the same time, to partly distance himself from it by attributing it to the devil), which would have seemed like an alien element if it had been included in the main text. Thus, by 'correcting' the poem, the printer's devil adds a joke that is unrelated to the poem but nevertheless chimes in with the buoyant and even childish mood of the poem.

Another characteristic example of an annotation attributed to a printer's devil can be found in the satire *Little Odes to Great Folks* (1808), written by a 'Pindar Minimus'. In a footnote, the annotator 'Sextus Scriblerus' explains that he "would seriously advise him [Lord Erskine] to practice on the *dumb-belles*" (Pindar Minimus 62, original emphasis). The last two words of the note are again annotated as follows: "Is not this a mistake in orthography? – *Printer's Devil*" (ibid.). The bawdy pun drawing on the difference between 'dumb-bells' vs. 'dumb-belles', which might have been easily overlooked otherwise, is emphasised by the devil's seemingly naive and innocent note.

It is unknown whether Byron knew Almon's poem or *Little Odes to Great Folks*, but he was well-acquainted with William Gifford's *The Baviad* and *The Mæviad*, which contain two (three in the revised edition of 1797) annotations signed by the printer's devil. Two of them introduce puns (cf. Gifford, *The Baviad, and Mæviad* viii; 128); the other one is a garrulous and pedantic note, which corrects the word 'shoes' to 'slippers' and contemplates the meaning of the term 'accommodated' (cf. 38).

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As a whole, in Byron's time annotations attributed to the printer's devil seem to have had two (often connected) uses: (1) pretending to have spotted a typographical error in the annotated text, thereby drawing attention to, or introducing, puns, and (2) seemingly contradicting or correcting the main text while actually supporting its satiric thrust or introducing jokes related or unrelated to the text.[185]

3.3.3 The Waltz*: Reinforcing and Disowning the Satirical Attack*

The first time the printer's devil appears in Byron's œuvre is in the anonymously published *The Waltz* (1813). In this satire, the annotated passage reads "Blest was the time Waltz chose for her debut; / The Court, the R––t, like herself were new" (*Waltz* 161–62) and is followed by this annotation:

> An anachronism – Waltz, and the battle of Austerlitz, are before said to have opened the ball together – the Bard means (if he means any thing), Waltz was not so much in vogue till the R––t attained the acme of his popularity. Waltz, the Comet, Whiskers, and the new Government, illuminated heaven and earth, in all their glory, much about the same time: of these the Comet only has disappeared; the other three continue to astonish us still. PRINTER'S DEVIL. (*Waltz* 162n; *CPW* 3: 401)

The printer's devil makes us aware of an (easily overlooked) ambiguity in the poem, namely the fact that it presents two contradictory dates for the introduction of waltzing into England: the annotated lines 161–62 suggest the year 1811 (when the Prince of Wales became Regent), whereas the lines "She came – Waltz came – and with her certain sets / Of true dispatches, and as true Gazettes; / Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest dispatch" suggest 1805 (67–69). Since Byron added the annotation only in the first proof (cf. editor's n in *CPW* 3: 401), it is possible that he spotted (or was made aware of) this contradiction

185 Other telling examples of the printer's devil appear in **(1)** vol. 30 of the *Anti-Jacobin* (4 June 1798; reprinted in Canning and Frere's *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* 1799), where the devil spots a mistake in the poem (cf. 179 in repr.); **(2)** vol. 12 (1809) of the *Universal Magazine*, where the devil detects 'plagiarisms' in the text ("Literary Adventures" 372); **(3)** the preface to Edward Du Bois's *Fashionable Biography* (1808), where the devil again spots a pun (the phrase "a luminous collection of speeches" is followed by the annotation "Quaere, *vo*-luminous. *Printer's Devil*") (Du Bois xxxviii, original emphasis); **(4)** a review of Sydney Owenson's *Woman, or Ida of Athens* in the *Quarterly Review* (vol. 1, Feb. 1809), in which the devil facetiously corrects the review ("Review of *Woman, or Ida of Athens*" 51); and **(5)** an article about the "sage" committee of Drury Lane Theatre in *The London Literary Gazette* (no. 50, 3 Jan. 1818) annotated thus: "The Printer's Devil, who is a bit of a critic, has just come to us to know if it should not be written *stage* committee. He thought *sage* must be a mistake" ("The Drama" 125, original emphasis).

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within the poem while revising the text. If the note appended to this passage had been unsigned (and, consequently, attributed to either the speaker of the passage or the poem's author), one would wonder why the speaker or author chose to point out a 'mistake' in his own text rather than correct it before publishing. Hence, by shifting the responsibility for the note to a fictional annotator who is not identical with the speaker or author of the poem, the two passages in the main text can remain as they are and serve as anchors for a note that performs several (slightly contradictory) functions.

First of all, the annotation introduces satirical elements that are not explicitly mentioned in the annotated passage itself. Thus, the fictional commentator reinforces and expands the attack of the text by 'correcting' a minor issue in the poem. This is here achieved by the devil explaining that "Waltz was not so much in vogue till the R––t attained the acme of his popularity", which insinuates that the Regent's popularity had already waned since. Further, the incongruous list "Waltz, the Comet, Whiskers, and the new Government" (which to some extent reminds one of the famous "Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux" in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1.118)), reduces Lord Liverpool's government to the level of a new, indecent dance, a short-lived natural phenomenon, and a fashion for beards. The comment that waltz, whiskers, and the government "continue to astonish us" adds a further point to the attack.

The devil's doubt whether the Bard "means any thing" can be read in different ways, which to some extent depend on who we assume to be speaking in the annotated passage (for a similar case, also see chapter 3.2.1.2). The preface for *The Waltz* claims that the poem was penned by Horace Hornem – a clearly fictional persona,[186] who explains that his poem is a praise of waltzing and that he composed it "with the aid of W. F. Esq. and a few hints from Dr. B. (whose recitations I attend, and am monstrous fond of Master B.'s manner of delivering his father's late successful D. L. Address)" (*CPW* 3: 23). 'W. F.' refers to William Fitzgerald, whom Byron ridicules at the very beginning of *EBSR*, while 'Dr. B.' refers to William Busby, who was enraged that his proposal for a poem to be delivered at the re-opening of Drury Lane Theatre had been rejected in favour of Byron, who had not even handed in a proposal. The preface thus links the fictional author of the poem to two of Byron's enemies.

186 Hornem's exceedingly naive tone and the other persons mentioned in the preface (the Countess of Waltzaway, the Honourable Augustus Tiptoe) made it obvious to contemporary readers that he was a fictional persona rather than the real author. It is likely that his name is a pun on 'horn [i.e. cuckold] them' (cf. *OED* "horn, *v.*" def. 2.).

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It would, however, be wrong to make the fictional Hornem responsible for all sentiments expressed in the poem. Rather, the main text consists of single-voiced and double-voiced passages. In the former, the anonymous satirist (who may very well be identified with Byron) is writing straightforward and obvious satire, e.g. "New wars, because the old succeed so well, / That most survivors envy those who fell" (169–70). In the latter, readers hear both the naive fictional Hornem seriously praising waltzing and the present political order *and* the actual author being ironic, e.g. "We bless thee [Germany] still – for George the Third is left! / Of kings the best – and last, not least in worth, / For graciously begetting George the Fourth" (44–46).[187] The confusion of voices in the poem is further complicated by the fact that one annotation seems to be 'written' by Hornem, while the rest can be attributed to the anonymous satirist. (Hornem's annotation is the one for line 34: "My Latin is all forgotten […], but I bought my title-page motto of a Catholic priest"; *CPW* 3: 396.) The fiction that the work was written by Hornem is hence not sustained throughout the work. The passage annotated by the printer's devil occurs at a point when the alleged authorship of the poem shifts from Hornem to the anonymous satirist.

Gods! how the glorious theme my strain exalts, And rhyme finds partner rhyme in praise of 'Waltz'.	Hornem
Blest was the time Waltz chose for her debut; The Court, the R——t, like herself were new; New face for friends, for foes some new rewards, New ornaments for black – and royal guards; New laws to hang the rogues that roared for bread	Unclear Satirist (*Waltz* 159–65)

Thus, it remains unclear whether the printer's devil's doubt that the Bard "means any thing" refers to Hornem or to the anonymous satirist himself. If it refers to the former, the devil's depreciating remark adds to the attack that is perpetrated by the actual anonymous author against his naive and enthusiastic fictional speaker Hornem. If it refers to the anonymous satirist, it can either merely be a humorous, self-ironic remark on the side of Byron or an attempt to partly dissociate himself from the dangerous satirical attacks in the poem.[188]

187 The double-voicedness of passages in which the real author is being ironic and the fictional annotator is being serious can, of course, also be seen in Pope's use of the annotator persona 'Scriblerus'. (Though in the case of Scriblerus, it is often ambiguous whether he is really serious or rather ironic as well.) For a more detailed comparison between Byron's printer's devil and Pope's Scriblerus, see chapter 4.1.

188 In his notes, McGann explains that *The Waltz* was published anonymously and did not name John Murray as publisher because Byron and Murray feared the "possible legal and political repercussions" of the satiric poem (editor's n in *CPW* 3: 395).

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In any case, the devil's "if he means any thing" creates distance between the real author and what is expressed in the annotated passage, either by pretending that he is unaccountable for its sentiment because it is still Hornem who is speaking or by insinuating that the author himself may not take his own satire entirely serious. Furthermore, the printer's devil's potential jibe against the author of the poem to some extent also serves to draw a clear line between Byron and his fictional 'annotator', which, as a consequence, distances Byron from the devil's ridicule of the Regent and government.

What is at stake in this annotation is not the correctness of the main text, i.e. whether waltz was introduced to England in 1805 or in 1811. Rather, the note strengthens the political attack of the passage (by introducing yet another jibe at the government) *and* playfully dissociates the real satirist from the attack. This ambiguity can never be wholly resolved and must be analysed with respect to different readerships: the added criticism of the Regent and Liverpool's government caters to readers who share the satirist's political opinions, while possible critics of this passage may be appeased by the fact that it is unclear whether the sentiments expressed in it can really be attributed to the actual author himself. Like some of the annotations in which Byron tries to forestall anticipated objections to his poems (see chapters 3.4.2 and 3.4.3), this note hence combines attack and defence.

3.3.4 Beppo*: Romantic Irony*

In *Beppo*, readers are confronted with a particularly creative printer's devil. The annotated stanza of the main text reads:

> Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
> Italian Beauty! didst thou not inspire
> Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
> With all we know of heaven, or can desire
> In what he hath bequeathed us? In what Guise,
> Though flashing from the fervour of the Lyre,
> Would Words describe thy past and present Glow,
> While yet Canova can create below? (*Beppo* 46)

Instead of being content with annotating the poem in prose, the printer's devil continues it in verse at the bottom of the page,[189] using the same rhyme scheme as the poem but hexameter rather than pentameter:

189 I could not find any earlier instance of a printer's devil adding a stanza to a poem; Byron seems to have been the first to employ this persona in such an elaborate manner. In Alfred de Musset's "Mardoche" (which is modelled on Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan*) one finds another rhymed annotation, which, however, is not signed by the printer's devil (cf.

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(In talking thus, the writer, more especially
Of women, would be understood to say,
He speaks as a spectator, not officially,
And always, reader, in a modest way;
Perhaps, too, in no very great degree shall he
Appear to have offended in this lay,
Since, as all know, without the sex, our sonnets
Would seem unfinish'd, like their untrimm'd bonnets.)
(Signed) PRINTER'S DEVIL. (*CPW* 4: 487–88)

The printer's devil's annotation (anchored in the last line of the stanza) here anticipates an objection, namely that the passage (like the whole poem) is too bawdy and that it is based on Byron's own amatory adventures in Venice. (The devil here very likely has in mind readers' eagerness to identify Byron's heroes and narrators with the author.) The accusation of bawdiness is all the more understandable when one takes into account the annotation provided for "Raphael, who died in thy embrace", which appears a few lines earlier. This annotation reads: "For the received accounts of the cause of Raphael's death see his Lives" (*CPW* 4: 487). For those in the know, this note makes a half-hidden reference to Giorgio Vasari's *The Lives of the Artists*, where it is asserted that Raphael died after having "pursued his amorous pleasures beyond all moderation" (Vasari 336).

A large part of the joke consists in the printer's devil attempt to deny both what is obvious from this context, namely that the passage is indeed erotic, and what Byron's friends knew (and other contemporaries would have guessed), i.e. that "the writer" was far from being a mere "spectator" of Venetian love intrigues. With regard to its socio-pragmatic dimension, the note thus draws attention to the possible autobiographical background by pretending to disavow it. As is the case in many self-annotations (see chapters 2.2.1.2; 2.4; 3.4.2; and 3.4.3), the feigned defence gives way to an ostentatious indulgence in the very interpretation it claims to deny.

As far as the intratextual dimension of the note is concerned, the contrast between the tone of the note and that of the annotated passage is striking (for the same phenomenon in *CHP* and *The Giaour*, see chapters 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.1.2). The unbridled enthusiasm of the stanza is undercut by the facetious note, especially by its concluding couplet. These two lines raise the question whether Byron's praise of an "Italian Beauty" is simply a poetic convention that has to be adhered to lest the poem be "unfinish'd, like their untrimm'd

Bishop 44). There are also two rhymed notes signed by the printer's devil in Alexander d'Arblay's 1836 comical poem *Caïssa rediviva*, which are most likely indebted to *Beppo* (cf. d'Arblay 19; 26).

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bonnets". In *Don Juan*, such passages of Romantic irony, in which a concept or feeling is first introduced in earnest only to be ridiculed later, will be integrated in the poem itself. In *Beppo*, however, there is no juxtaposition of the serious and the comical *within* the poem because the poem itself is facetious and bawdy almost throughout.[190] Like stanza 46, the few other serious stanzas that can be found in the poem (e.g. 13–14) are integrated in such a way that they are not undermined by the surrounding facetious passages. As a consequence, in *Beppo*, the only jarring juxtaposition of pathos and facetiousness appears in the interplay between poem and note in stanza 46.

Like stanza 51 of *Beppo*,[191] the apposition of stanza 46 and its annotation can be seen as a metatextual element, introducing a hint of literary criticism as well as self-criticism into the work. The serious stanza is followed by a comical one at the bottom of the page, which re-enacts on a much smaller scale the fact that the (mainly) serious *CHP* and oriental tales were succeeded by the (mainly) comical *Beppo*. Thus, *CHP*, the oriental tales, and *Beppo* taken together present the unsettling case of an author who combines two diametrically opposite styles in his œuvre, which is now mirrored in the stark tonal contrast between stanza 46 and its annotation. This can be interpreted as a signal by Byron to his readers that he would either (1) from now on reject his earlier manner and only produce comical poetry, or (2) that this brief combination of the serious and the facetious was only a foretaste and that he would attempt to integrate the two more often and more radically than in this passage.[192] When readers opened the first two cantos of *Don Juan* a year later, they immediately knew that the latter was the case.

190 Referring to the annotated stanza 46, the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 29, no. 58, Feb. 1818) comments: "This […] is the only slip of the kind in the whole work – the only passage in which the author betrays the secret […] of his own genius and his affinity to a higher order of poets than those to whom he has here been pleased to hold out a model" ("Review of *Beppo*" 307).

191 The relevant lines in stanza 51 famously read: "Oh that I had the art of easy writing / What should be easy reading! […] / […] / How quickly would I print (the world delighting) / A Grecian, Syrian, or *Assy*rian tale; / And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism, / Some samples of the finest Orientalism" (original emphasis). Commenting on these lines, Michael K. Joseph argues that *Beppo* "is like one of the Turkish Tales turned inside-out; Beppo's life as a slave, renegade, and pirate, which would have made the experience of an early Byronic hero, is relegated to the distant background; and Byron turns his back on the Orientalism which he had exploited and fostered" (Joseph 135).

192 At the same time, one might go so far as to suggest that the note already contains a subtle hint of criticism of Byron's new poetic style: the fact that the note is signed by the printer's devil insinuates that even a mere errand boy can write a perfect *ottava rima* stanza.

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In contrast to the previous and the next example, here the presence of the printer's devil is not really needed in order for to the annotation to 'work'. It could just as well have remained unsigned. Nevertheless, the fact that the note is attributed to the printer's devil rather than the speaker of the lines or the author of the poem means two things. First, the humorousness of the apparently defensive note is emphasised by being put into the mouth of a persona that – by contemporary literary convention – is either a naive fool or an ironic wag.[193] Secondly, the devil's presence means that the two different tones that are found in the stanza and the note can be attributed to two ostensibly different speakers. This is what distinguishes the present case of Romantic irony from those in *Don Juan*, where usually (but by no means always) *one and the same speaker* first introduces and then subverts a concept.

3.3.5 Don Juan*: Activating Background Knowledge*

In *Don Juan*, the printer's devil is put to the use that would have been most familiar to Byron's contemporaries, namely to introduce or draw attention to puns. There are two examples of such notes in the poem, but the one appearing at 10.15 will not be discussed here because it is rather straightforward and simple.[194] The other annotation in *Don Juan* which is signed by the printer's devil offers a great deal more matter for analysis. It is appended to the first stanza of the ninth canto:

> Oh, Wellington! (or 'Villainton' – for Fame
> Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
> France could not even conquer your great name,
> But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase –
> Beating or beaten she will laugh the same),
> You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
> Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
> Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!' (*Don Juan* 9.1)

193 As in many of the annotations attributed to Scriblerus in Pope's *Dunciad*s, it remains unclear whether the printer's devil is being naive or ironic, i.e. whether or not he is fully aware that his defence of the poem is untenable.

194 The note appears in the middle of an attack against lawyers, where readers are presented with the following metaphor: "A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper, / And that's the reason he himself's so dirty: / The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper / Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he" (*Don Juan* 10.15). The concise annotation for "soot" merely reads "Query, *suit?* – Printer's devil" (*CPW* 5: 743). The devil pretends to have spotted a typographical error, which would mean that the poem actually contains a reference to lawyers who unnecessarily protract lawsuits for personal gain. The printer's devil ensures that all readers are aware of the joke and reaffirms the metaphorical link between lawyer and chimney-sweeper.

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Yet again, the printer's devil pretends to have spotted an error in the text and comments: "Query, *Ney?* – Printer's Devil" (*CPW* 5: 737). Modern readers may wonder why the printer's devil here proposes a simple spelling variant, but Byron's contemporaries would immediately have recognised a reference to Michel Ney, one of Napoleon's most important commanders. After Napoleon had been banished to Elba, Ney declared for the Bourbons and, on Napoleon's escape and landing in France, marched against him. However, Ney quickly reverted to Napoleon, led parts of the emperor's troops in the battles of Quatre-Bras and Waterloo, and was executed on 7 December 1815 for his treason against the Bourbons. Depending on whether we read the stanza with or without the annotation referring to Ney, the last line can be paraphrased in different ways.

Without the annotation that insinuates that "Nay" should read "Ney", the line simply asserts that "Humanity would rise, and thunder 'No – Wellington's glory cannot/should not be questioned'". Given the context of the line, i.e. the pun on Wellington's name as "Villainton", the emphasis on the fact that he has gained "great pensions", and the stanzas following it (in which, among other things, Wellington is called the "the best of cut–throats" (*Don Juan* 9.4)), the irony of this line would, however, still be fairly obvious.

When trying to take into account the annotation, it does not become entirely clear at first sight what exactly the reference to Ney adds to the meaning of the passage (McGann offers no explanation in his notes in *CPW* 5: 737). Ceryl Giuliano suggests that it is meant to allude to Ney's betrayal of the Bourbon king (cf. Giuliano 70), but the paraphrase "Glory like yours should any dare gainsay, / Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Ney betrayed his king!'" is far from convincing, since it introduces an issue that is quite unrelated to the attack on Wellington and even undermines the satire against the Duke by criticising one of his main opponents.

Rather, the annotation refers to Wellington's involvement (or lack thereof) in Ney's execution, which will become apparent by reconstructing the controversy surrounding what the *Encyclopædia Britannica* calls "one of the most divisive trials in French history" ("Michel Ney, Duke d'Elchingen" n.pag.). In theory, Article 12 of the Convention of St. Cloud (3 July 1815, settling the terms for the capitulation of Paris) granted amnesty to everyone in Paris who was still resisting the Bourbons and their British and Prussian Allies in exchange for their surrender – regardless of their former stations, actions and political opinions.[195] During his trial for high treason in late 1815, Ney referred to this

195 The original article 12 reads: "Seront pareillement respectées les personnes et les propriétés particulières; les Habitans et en général tous les Individus qui se trouvent dans

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article and demanded to be acquitted. This was refused on the grounds that the treaty had only been signed by Prussian and British leaders rather than Louis XVIII and his new government themselves and that the French king, hence, was not bound by it. Ney wrote an appeal to Wellington (as one of the persons in whose name the treaty was set up), in which he entreated him to "cause an end to be put, with regards to me, to all criminal procedure" ("The Marshal to the Ambassadors" 239).[196] Wellington argued that he had no right to interfere with Louis XVIII's decision, and Ney was executed.

Wellington's decision was heavily criticised by many British Whigs and Radicals who argued that he had betrayed Ney's trust. Two days before Ney's execution, Lord Holland, a prominent figure in the Whig opposition, wrote to Lord Kinnaird (brother of Byron's close friend Douglas Kinnaird):

> Technical arguments may possibly be urged on both sides; and though they appear to me all in favour of Ney's claim, it is not on them I lay the stress, but on the obvious and practical aspect of the transaction, as it must strike impartial men and posterity. [...] A promise of security was held out to the inhabitants of Paris; they surrendered their town; and while Wellington and the Allies were still really in possession of it, Labedoyere was executed, and Ney was tried for political opinions and conduct. Even of subsequent executions (and I fear there will be many), it will be said the Allies delivered over their authority in Paris to a French government, without exacting an observance of the stipulations on which they originally acquired it. (qtd. in Whishaw 140–41)

On 24 December 1815, the Hunt brothers' radical newspaper *The Examiner* published an indignant commentary on Ney's execution, attacking Wellington for his role in the trial:

> [I]t is quite ludicrous in our eyes to pretend that Marshal Ney was properly tried. [...] Did not Lord Wellington clearly evince, that he thought himself, with whatever officiousness, acting all along on behalf of the Bourbons [when setting up the treaty]; and did not the Bourbons follow him up like their avant-couriers and enter into all the gates he had opened for them? The Noble Duke [Wellington] indeed has since been applied to for his opinion on the subject, – he has been applied to for interpretation of an article, which in common with the rest was

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la Capitale, continueront à jouir de leurs droits et libertés, sans pouvoir être inquiétés ni recherchés en rien, relativement aux fonctions qu'ils occupent ou auraient occupées, à leur conduite et à leurs opinions politiques" ("Convention entre les Commisaires" 194).

196 Ney's letter and Wellington's answer were reprinted, and commented on, in *Cobbett's Political Register* ("The Marshal to the Ambassadors", 25 Nov. 1816) and *The Examiner* ("Foreign Intelligence" 26 Nov. 1815). Both newspapers had radical leanings; *The Examiner* was published by John Hunt, who also became Byron's new publisher in 1822.

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> to be construed, in case of doubt, in favour of the French; and he has given it against the French. ("Gloomy State of Things in France" 817)

It is with this knowledge about contemporary opinions on Wellington's involvement in Ney's trial in mind that the printer's devil's annotation has to be read.[197] The most likely paraphrase of the last two lines of *Don Juan* 9.1 would hence be: "Glory like yours should any dare gainsay, / Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Yes, given his role in Ney's trial, you are right in questioning Wellington's glory'".[198]

Another possible (related) paraphrase arises against the background that in 1821 (two years prior to the publication of the ninth canto of *Don Juan*) Ney's son Michel Louis Félix Ney wanted to challenge Wellington to a duel (cf. H. Arbuthnot 1: 118).[199] In Italy, where Byron lived in 1821, there were even rumours that "Wellington had been killed in a duel with the son of Marshal Ney" (Cochran (ed.) in Guiccioli 643). Given the open antagonism of Ney's son towards Wellington, another paraphrase of the lines could hence use "Ney!" as an appellative and read: "Glory like yours should any dare gainsay, / Humanity

197 Byron's own opinion of Ney is not known. He does not mention him in any of his letters or journal entries. Apart from the annotation discussed here, only his "Ode (From the French)" (1816) makes a reference to Ney. The respective lines in this poem read: "[Ney] whose honoured grave / Contains the 'bravest of the brave'" (9–10). The lines do, however, not necessarily have to reflect Byron's personal opinion. Even though the poem is an original composition, the title and headnote of the anonymously published work claim that it is only a translation of a French poem (ascribed to Chateaubriand); hence, Byron might only voice actual or possible French assessments of Ney. For Byron's unfavourable opinion of Wellington, see M. Williams, "'I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it)'" *passim*.

198 In a journal entry from 1818, Byron's close friend John Cam Hobhouse mentions an epigram which might have served as a prototype for the Nay-Ney pun in *Don Juan* (cf. Cochran (ed.), *Don Juan, Canto 9* 2n2): "Lord Holland repeated to me an epigram on Kinnaird's Memoir, which turned on the folly of listening to the Duke of Wellington's guarantee: 'To all the Duke could say, / You should have answered, *Ney*'" (Hobhouse, *Recollections* 2: 98, original emphasis). The epigram refers to the fact that Wellington (according to Lord Kinnaird) had guaranteed amnesty to a man called Marinêt, whom Kinnaird had been able to persuade to go to Paris to identify a man who had made an attempt on Wellington's life. Despite the (in Kinnaird's view) promised amnesty, Marinêt was arrested and tried (but eventually acquitted) for his connivance in the attempted assassination (cf. Cochran (ed.), *The Byron-Hobhouse Correspondence* 47n133). Byron mentions the incident in *Don Juan* 9.2. In his edition of *Don Juan*, E. H. Coleridge provides detailed background information on the case (cf. E. H. Coleridge (ed.) 6: 374). For Kinnaird's reaction to Marinêt's arrest, see his *Letter to the Duke of Wellington, on the Arrest of M. Marinet* (1818).

199 Also see the article about this incident in Hunt's *The Examiner* on 16 September 1821, which is highly sympathetic to Ney's son and critical of Wellington (cf. "Challenge of Marshal Ney's Son").

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would rise, and thunder [ironically] 'Michel Louis Félix Ney! (How dare you question Wellington's glory?)'."

In the poem itself, the *Nay-Ney* pun may have been easily overlooked by readers, especially since the canto was published eight years after Ney's execution. The annotation consisting of only four words ("Query, *Ney?* – Printer's Devil"), however, suffices to conjure up a whole range of topical associations in contemporary readers' minds and, thereby, adds to the satirical thrust of the poem. Without having to spell out another point in his attack against Wellington, Byron trusts that his readers' background knowledge about the controversy surrounding Ney's trial will supply the rest. The annotation thus makes obvious what is only implied in the poem itself. The printer's devil here serves as an extremely efficient means of broadening the range of Byron's satire. Given the political implications of the note, it would most likely have especially resonated with the radical target readers of Byron's new publisher John Hunt rather than the more conservative readership of his old publisher John Murray.

Conclusion

The three examples of the printer's devil as an annotator in *The Waltz*, *Beppo*, and *Don Juan* attest to the creativity with which this persona was employed by Byron.[200] In *The Waltz* and *Don Juan* it is used for political satire, while in *Beppo* it introduces a self-ironic, meta-literary remark. The main strategy employed in the example in *The Waltz* is the ambiguation of who is speaking in the annotated passage, which, in turn, ambiguates the function of the annotation: it both reinforces the satire against the Prince Regent and Lord Liverpool, *and* partly distances Byron from this satire. In *Beppo* – as in *CHP* and *The Giaour* before it – we are confronted with a passionate and serious section in the poem that is juxtaposed with an irreverent note. The comical

200 The printer's devil – both as an annotatorial persona and a character in fiction – remained popular throughout the nineteenth century. He was either employed as a naive laughing-stock who inadvertently commits blunders (e.g. in Poe's short story "X-ing a Paragrab" [sic]) or as a witty commentator who makes ironic remarks on the annotated poem (e.g. in the 1857 *Job Morbid's Pilgrimage* written by a certain 'D. R. M.'). I am grateful to Anthony Grafton for drawing my attention to Poe's story.

Employed both as a clever, ironic character *and* as the inept butt of authors' jokes, the printer's devil can thus be compared to Pope's annotatorial persona 'Martinus Scriblerus', who suffered the same fate at the hands of both Pope himself and later writers. Reviewers' and authors' propensity to jokingly attribute typographical errors to the printer's devil continues to this day (see, for instance, Alcock et al. which begins: "By a curious trick of the proverbial printer's devil, about ten pages of the original print-out did not appear" 289).

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distance between the actual meaning of the passage and what the printer's devil (seriously or ironically) asserts about it adds a great deal to the humour of the note. This passage in *Beppo* – in just sixteen lines (eight in the poem, eight in the note) – encapsulates not one but two of the main turning points of Byron's career. The annotated stanza harks back to his older works like *CHP* and the oriental tales, which were almost entirely serious and lofty (for exceptions, see chapter 3.2.1). The note itself exemplifies Byron's (re)turn to comedy in *Beppo*. And the combination of solemn passage and facetious note (while also looking back to older examples of this in *CHP* and *The Giaour*) anticipates the Romantic irony of *Don Juan*. In *Don Juan* itself, the printer's devil's annotation on the Nay/Ney pun shows how well this persona lends itself to strategic ambiguation and to ingeniously activating readers' background knowledge.[201] Furthermore, if the annotation were unsigned, much of the humour of the passage would be lost. Being attributed to the printer's devil, the note presents us with a little apprentice who is either clever and mischievous enough to tease out the author's satirical thrust or who (the author might ironically claim) ineptly misinterprets a harmless passage that meant absolutely no offence to Wellington. If unsigned, however, the note would simply leave readers with the stale aftertaste of just having witnessed an author explain his own joke.

3.4 Mimicking Evaluative Notes in Byron: Justification, Mock-Justification, and No Justification

Throughout his works, Byron draws attention to the fact that he is "quite sensitive to the presence of his many readers – indeed, his acts of writing are equally acts of imagining them into existence, and then talking with them" (McGann, "Private Poetry, Public Deception" 120). As a consequence, his poems are "intrinsically conversational in [their] manner of anticipating and incorporating recalcitrant, external material and dissonant opinion" (Stabler, "Byron, Conversation and Discord" 121). One way in which Byron imagines, and reacts to, readers' reception of his poems is by appending notes that anticipate possible criticism and address actual objections. As shown in chapter 2.4, such evaluative annotations have a long history: from Antiquity onwards, editors included notes in which they assess, defend, and sometimes also condemn their authors; and Pope's evaluative annotations on the *Dunciad*s show how creatively and ambiguously self-annotators appropriated this discourse tradition.

201 For the connection between ambiguity and poetic economy, see Bross *passim*.

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In the two examples from Pope discussed above, the satirist uses a variety of strategies that make it difficult to decide whether these notes constitute genuine defences of the poem or whether they rather revel in its offensiveness. In Byron's evaluative annotations, we can observe three main strategies: (1) straightforward justifications, (2) defences that seem half-hearted at best and can more or less be seen as mock-justifications, and in one case (3) the fabrication of an alleged objection by a reader and Byron's facetious refusal to defend himself against this (invented) objection.[202] Thus, the ambiguity of Byron's evaluative notes stems less from the question whether they are genuine or ironic defences. Rather, chapter 3.4.1 presents a note that retrospectively ambiguates the whole poem by correcting a factual mistake in it, while chapter 3.4.2 shows how Byron relies on readers' background knowledge to detect the fact that his 'defence' actually aggravates the offensiveness of the poem. Chapter 3.4.3, then, discusses how Byron uses a deliberately nonsensical justification to both acknowledge and disavow his debt to another author, and chapter 3.4.4 shows how he uses an evaluative note to again ambiguate an entire poem, while also transforming a supposedly defensive annotation into an intertextual allusion to Pope's *Dunciad*s.

3.4.1 *Genuine Defence: Poetic Licence and Retrospective Ambiguation in "Lachin Y Gair"*

Byron's preoccupation with facts and his "almost pedantic concern for truth" are notorious (Barton 16). For instance, enraged by his publisher Murray having doubts whether he was correct in having a Muslim character mention Cain, Byron retorted: "I don't care one lump of Sugar for my *poetry* – but for my *costume* and my *correctness* on those points […] I will combat lustily" (*BLJ* 3: 165, original emphasis). Likewise, regarding the shipwreck scene in the second canto of *Don Juan*, Byron boasted that there "was not a *single circumstance* of

202 There are a few further, minor examples of defensive/corrective notes in Byron. In the notes on *CHP* I, he acknowledges a factual mistake in his poem to which Scott had drawn his attention after its publication (cf. *CHP* 1.20n; *CPW* 2: 187). In a note on *The Prophecy of Dante*, he asks readers to pronounce "Beatrice" in the Italian way, so that the iambic pentameter remains intact (cf. 1.11n; *CPW* 4: 501), and in *Parisina* he quotes Shakespeare's *Richard II* to justify his use of "haught" for "haughty" (cf. 267n; *CPW* 3: 491). Furthermore, in *Mazeppa*, he explains that it is permissible to describe the Palatine (a high-ranking official) as being as rich as a salt mine because, according to the note, Poland's wealth consisted mainly in salt mines (cf. 157n; *CPW*: 4: 494). And in a note for the expression "strip[ping] the Saxons of their *hydes*" in *Don Juan* (10.36, original emphasis), Byron facetiously explains: "I believe a hyde of land to be a legitimate word, and, as such, subject to the tax of a quibble" (*CPW* 5: 744).

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it – *not* taken from *fact*" (*BLJ* 8: 186, original emphasis).[203] As proud as Byron was whenever his own texts corresponded to this criterion of factuality, as contemptuous he was when those of others did not. This becomes clear from, for instance, "Paper I" in the notes on the second canto of *CHP* (2.73n). There, he mocks Sydney Owenson's novel *Woman, or Ida of Athens* and requests the author

> when she next borrows an Athenian heroine for her four volumes, to have the goodness to marry her to somebody more of a gentleman than a 'Disdar Aga', (who by the by is not an Aga) the most impolite of petty officers. (*CPW* 2: 199)

It is thus no surprise, then, that Byron tried to avoid similar ridicule by anxiously acknowledging when his works deviated from historical, cultural, or geographical fact.[204] For instance, in an annotation on *The Siege of Corinth*, Byron admits that he took the poetic licence "to transplant the jackall from Asia" into Greece (*Siege* 1024n, *CPW* 3: 487),[205] and in a note for *The Island*, he explains that the cave in which Christian and Neuha hide indeed exists but that he moved it to another island (cf. *Island* 3.122n, *CPW* 7: 146–47). These two examples, however, only revolve around very minor details in the respective works; the question whether these descriptions follow or deviate from fact has no consequence for readers' interpretation of the texts as a whole.

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203 Also see Byron's letter to Murray, in which he tells his publisher to write a note alerting readers to cases in which he made use of poetic licence in *Marino Faliero*: "*Make a Note* of this and put *Editor* as the Subscription to it. As I make such pretensions to accuracy – I should not like to be *twitted* even with such trifles on that score. – Of the play – they may say what they please but not so of my costume – and dram. pers. [dramatis personae] they having been real existences" (*BLJ* 7: 201, original emphasis).

204 In this respect, Byron is very similar to Scott, who likewise felt "obliged to indicate in the notes those occasions when he has departed from historical truth in the text" (Alexander 167; cf. also Clubbe 75). See, for example, the notes for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, where, in an annotation for canto 4, stanza 6, Scott explains that he introduced Lord William Howard "[b]y a poetical anachronism [...] into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished" (W. Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* 272–73). Both Byron and Scott also took care to point out that their descriptions indeed corresponded to reality whenever they anticipated that readers might unjustly tax them with having deviated from facts (cf. Mayer, "The Illogical Status of Novelistic Discourse" 918). See, for example, Byron, *Island* 4.153n; *CPW* 7: 147.

205 In his edition of *The Siege of Corinth*, Cochran suggests that Byron not only wanted to forestall criticism for this instance of poetic licence but that he was also "determined to let the world know that he had seen eagles over Parnassus, and [as Byron explains later in the note] heard jackals howling in the ruins of Ephesus" (Cochran (ed.), *Siege of Corinth* 27n41). Thus, in this instance, Byron's apparent concern for accuracy can also be seen as a pretext for self-presentation.

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In the case of the short poem "Lachin Y Gair" (included in *Hours of Idleness*) things lie differently. Here, the acknowledgement that the text deviates from historical fact has bearings on the meaning of the entire poem. "Lachin Y Gair" is concerned with the speaker's nostalgia for his childhood in the Highlands; the fourth stanza of the poem celebrates his Jacobite ancestors:

> 'Ill starred, though brave, did no visions foreboding,
> Tell you that Fate had forsaken your cause?'
> Ah! were you destin'd to die at Culloden,
> Victory crown'd not your fall with applause[.] ("Lachin Y Gair" 25–28)

At this point in the poem, readers have no reason whatsoever to doubt that the speaker's ancestors really died at the battle of Culloden. Quite on the contrary: the statement is even substantiated both in the poem and (initially at least) in the annotations. In the poem, this knowledge is presented as part of traditional folklore. Two stanzas earlier, the speaker remembers how

> [o]n chieftains, long perish'd, my memory ponder'd,
> . . . . . .
> For Fancy was cheer'd, by traditional story,
> Disclos'd by the natives of dark Loch na Garr. ("Lachin Y Gair" 11; 15–16)

A footnote for line 25 then supports these traditional tales with historical fact and suggests that the lines are not concerned with the ancestors of a fictional persona but with Byron's own:

> I allude here to my maternal ancestors, the 'Gordons', many of whom fought for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Pretender. This branch was nearly allied by blood, as well as attachment, to the STEWARTS [sic]. ("Lachin Y Gair" 25n; *CPW* 1: 373)

This first annotation for the passage hence suggests that what is asserted in the poem, namely that the speaker's (read: Byron's) ancestors were Jacobites and died at the battle of Culloden, is accurate. However, the annotation for line 27 – and this is the annotation that I will focus on here – suddenly casts doubt on this: "Whether any perished in the Battle of Culloden, I am not certain; but as many fell in the insurrection, I have used the name of the principal action, 'Pars pro toto'" ("Lachin Y Gair" 27n, *CPW* 1: 373).

Factuality and Decorum

On the most basic level, the juxtaposition of the annotated poetic passage (in combination with the note for line 25) and this annotation for line 27 is an

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attempt at finding a compromise between two competing forms of correctness, namely poetic decorum and historical accuracy. This compromise is mainly necessitated by Byron's claim (in the note for line 25) that the passage indeed refers to his own family history. This autobiographical dimension is also hinted at in the headnote of the poem, which ends with the remark "near Lachin y Gair, I spent some of the early part of my life, the recollection of which, has given birth to the following Stanzas" (*CPW* 1: 103). Without this headnote and the annotation for line 25, one could just as well assume that one is reading the ponderings of a fictional speaker on his fictional ancestors. However, because Byron here introduces the criterion of historical and biographical accuracy, he remains bound by it for the rest of the work. As a consequence, some way has to be found to integrate the lofty style of the poem and the much less glorious facts that it is based on. In the case of "Lachin Y Gair", this is achieved by relegating the latter to the paratext.

In the annotated section of the poem, the main concern clearly lies on decorum or, in other words, the avoidance of creating a mismatch between the style and the content of the lines. In the case of "Lachin Y Gair", decorum is achieved not by adapting the diction of the poem to the events that are being described but the other way round, namely by turning the real historical events that the lines refer to into something that can be depicted in such a lofty manner. The celebratory, proud, and martial style of the passage is appropriate for the last and most famous battle of the Jacobite uprisings; using it in allusion to a minor skirmish (or even to surviving the rebellion) would seem rather bathetic. The events that are referred to in the passage thus have to be elevated in order to match its style. The diction is set; the facts are variable.

The annotation on line 27, then, anticipates that readers might object to this tampering with history, and it acknowledges that Byron's ancestors did not die in the battle of Culloden.[206] Without the note, Byron would have risked being

206 It is not clear how much Byron actually knew about his Gordon ancestors and their involvement in the Jacobite uprisings. In *Gordons Under Arms*, Skelton and Bulloch name "103 Gordons [who] entered the field for the old Chevalier in 1715 and for Prince Charlie in 1745" but only mention very few who were killed in either insurrection (Skelton and Bulloch l; cf. 507–32). Prominent Jacobites who were members of Clan Gordon included Lord Lewis Gordon (1724–1754) and John Gordon of Glenbucket (c.1673–1750), neither of whom was closely related to Byron (cf. Aikman 123–34). In *The House of Gordon*, Bulloch does not mention Byron's great-grandfather, Alexander Gordon, 11th Laird of Gight, (1716–1760), in connection with Jacobite activities; he did not die in battle but most likely drowned himself (cf. Bulloch 114–17). What Byron does not mention in his note either is that there were also many Gordons who supported House Hanover, most prominently Cosmo Gordon, the third Duke of Gordon (cf. Way and Squire 147). However, there is no evidence that Byron intentionally overstated his family's Jacobite ties or its fatalities in

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accused of ignorance and careless research or an attempt to deliberately lie about his ancestors' fate in order to portray them in a more glorious light.[207] The annotation makes clear that this is not the case. It allows Byron to incorporate doubtful or inaccurate information in the poem while still complying with historical truth. The note is thus (unlike the ones that will be discussed below) an unequivocally sincere defence against objections that could be levelled at the poem. Put briefly, the poem transgresses against facts for the sake of decorum, while the rather bathetic note transgresses against decorum for the sake of facts.

The annotation for line 27 thus ambiguates the passage by creating two different versions of the same event, one in which the speaker's ancestors died in the battle and one in which they did not. The juxtaposition of the passage and the note also leads to the co-presence of two different genres and two different tones: the poem is a celebratory apostrophe to the speaker's ancestors, full of enthusiasm and pathos. The annotation, on the other hand, is a sceptical and self-consciousness antiquarian elucidation. Furthermore, the fact that the note explicitly names the rhetorical device used in the passage (Culloden as a 'pars pro toto' for the Jacobite uprisings as a whole) evinces expert knowledge that creates a stark contrast to the seemingly simple and folkloristic poem (which would later indeed become a popular folk song).

Enthusiasm vs. Distance

The ambiguities that result from the combination of poem and note cannot (and do not have to) be resolved. Rather, they contribute to a central aspect of "Lachin Y Gair" – an aspect which does not at all become apparent from the poem alone: the main speaker's wavering between his longing for and, at the same time, his growing detachment from, his childhood in the Highlands. For this argument, it is essential to first ascertain who is actually speaking in which parts of "Lachin Y Gair". As is shown below, I read lines 17–18 and 25–26 as spoken by the natives of Loch na Garr rather than by the main speaker of the poem. For one, this interpretation is based on lines 15–16, which seem to suggest that the lines following them are uttered by the natives. Furthermore, this reading explains why lines 17–18 and 25–26 are set off by quotation marks,

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the two uprisings; rather, he most likely did not know better and, as McGann suggests in his notes for "Lachin Y Gair", "seems to have had this romanticized history of the Gordons from his mother" (editor's n in *CPW* 1: 373). Thus, even though Byron's note on line 27 is still not entirely accurate, it nevertheless seems to reflect what he *believed* to be correct.

207 The Gordons of Gight to which Byron's belonged "had a record of violence and banditry, of feuding and murder" and "were among the most notorious of the Scottish lairds" (Marchand, *Life* 1: 16).

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which would not make sense if they were supposed to be expressed by the same speaker as the rest of the stanza. The annotation discussed here hence refers to lines that are part of the natives' traditional tales (lines 25–26), while the rest of the stanza consists of the main speaker's reaction to these tales.[208]

15	For Fancy was cheer'd, by traditional story, Disclos'd by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.	Main speaker
	'Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?'	Natives of Loch na Garr
	Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,	Main speaker's
20	And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale:	reaction
	. . . . .	
25	'Ill starred, though brave, did no visions foreboding, Tell you that Fate had forsaken your cause?'	Natives of Loch na Garr
	Ah! were you destin'd to die at Culloden,	Main speaker's
	Victory crown'd not your fall with applause;	reaction

("Lachin Y Gair" 15–20; 25–28)

If we ignore the annotations and focus on the poem alone, the speaker appears to wholeheartedly subscribe to the tales related to him by the natives of Loch na Garr, both with respect to his family history and to more general beliefs, e.g. about the afterlife (cf. 19–20). Furthermore, without the annotations, there is no reason *not* to believe that lines 19–24 and 27–32 (those in which the speaker enthusiastically reacts to the folktales) are spoken by the adult speaker now living in England and remembering the stories told to him in his childhood. In other words, if we disregard the annotations, the adult speaker still appears to have a completely uncritical stance towards the natives' tales. This changes once we also consider the footnotes.

Like the headnote to the poem, these footnotes are supposedly provided by the adult speaker, i.e. Byron (or a partly fictionalised version of him) at the time of the publication of *Hours of Idleness*. In contrast to the poem, these notes contain two instances in which the adult speaker and annotator distances himself from the world of his childhood. One is the note on Culloden, the other an annotation explaining that the proper pronunciation of the word "plaid" is "(according to the Scotch) […] shown by the Orthography" ("Lachin Y

208 The fact that Byron, in an annotation for lines supposed to be spoken by the natives of Loch na Garr, explains "*I* allude here to *my* maternal ancestors" makes clear that, ultimately, Byron is, of course, responsible for both the lines spoken by the natives and the lines uttered by the main speaker of the poem ("Lachin Y Gair" 25n, my emphasis).

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Gair" 10n; *CPW* 1: 373). While the speaker felt Scottish himself in his childhood, the Scotch now appear to be a people that the speaker is not longer a part of.

Focussing again on the annotation on Culloden, this distancing can mean two things for the interplay between the note and the annotated passage. On the one hand, the lines in the poem in which the speaker is reacting to the natives' tales may be attributed to the *adult* speaker who enthusiastically remembers the stories of his childhood in the poem but then counterbalances his uncritical reaction by appending the sceptical note on line 27.[209] This would suggest that the adult speaker is ambivalent towards the folktales; he is still fascinated by them but knows that they are not based on historical fact. On the other hand, one may also read the interaction between poem and note as an interaction between the young and the old, present speaker (or, put differently, the experiencing and the narrating I). In this case, lines 19–24 and 27–32 in the poem would provide readers with a glimpse of the young speaker immediately reacting to the tales he has just heard. The adult speaker would then use the annotation to implicitly criticise the naivety and fervour of his younger self that is shown in these lines. In this case, the speaker's distancing from the sentiments of the poem would be more pronounced. The possibilities of who is uttering which lines, depending on whether or not we take into account the annotations, can be summarised as follows:

Table 1 Speakers & Ambiguity in "Lachin Y Gair"

Lines	**Ignoring the notes: Who speaks where?**	**Taking into account the notes: Who speaks where?**
1–16	Present, older speaker	Present, older speaker
17–18	Natives	Natives
19–24	**Present, older speaker**	**Present, older speaker OR speaker in his childhood**
25–26	Natives	Natives
27–32	**Present, older speaker**	**Present, older speaker OR speaker in his childhood**
33–30	Present, older speaker	Present, older speaker
Notes	[ignored]	Present, older speaker

209 This possibility can be compared to the annotations and poetic interpolations that the fictional editor in *The Giaour* adds to the work: the interpolations react sympathetically to the emotions and ideas depicted in the rest of them poem, while the notes adopt an irreverent and sceptical stance towards them (see chapter 3.2.1.2).

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Regardless of whether the adult or the young version of the speaker is uttering the lines reacting to the natives' tales, the annotation for line 27 shows that the speaker feels more critical towards the world of his childhood than becomes apparent from the poem. The poem itself is a rather simple and nostalgic celebration of the speaker's Scottish heritage; in combination with the notes, however, "Lachin Y Gair" also becomes a work about his coming of age and the loss of his childhood illusions. The annotation on Culloden (as well as the one on "plaid") thus adds a whole new layer of meaning to the brief poem by suggesting that the speaker's attitude towards the convictions of his childhood is not as unquestioningly positive as it appears from the poem itself.

The note also shows that "Lachin Y Gair" makes it necessary to qualify Chatsiou's statement that "[i]n [Byron's] early works paratext was, to a large extent, subordinate to the poetic narrative, supporting and justifying its purposes and objectives" (Chatsiou, "Lord Byron" 643). Thanks to his annotations, even Byron's earliest works contain traces of the self-subversiveness and self-contradiction that would come to characterise *The Giaour* and – to an even greater extent – his master-piece *Don Juan.*

3.4.2 Don Juan*, Castlereagh's Suicide, and Feigned Piety*

In the next note discussed here, Byron only pretends to genuinely address possible objections against his poem while actually revelling in the impudence of the annotated passage and the note's half-hearted defence. The annotation appears at the very beginning of a passage that ridicules the late Viscount Castlereagh's notorious rhetorical incompetence.[210] His speeches are described as an "odd string of words […], / Which none divine, and every one obeys" (*Don Juan* 9.49), and Castlereagh himself as a "sad inexplicable beast of prey" and "monstrous Hieroglyphic" (9.50). In comparison to what Byron elsewhere wrote about Castlereagh (both before and after the politician's death), these descriptions seem almost mild.[211] What is most offensive in this passage,

210 For example, in a contemporary account in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, Castlereagh's speeches are described as being "full of unnecessary parentheses; stretched out by verbose repetitions; crowded with intangible propositions; and made ludicrous by absurd images" (J. Wilson et al. 84n).

211 One need only think of the preface to cantos 6–8 of *Don Juan*, published merely a month before cantos 9–11, which uses much harsher words against Castlereagh. In the preface, Byron anticipates that readers will object to a few stanzas alluding to Castlereagh and uses this as an opportunity to launch a severe attack on the late Foreign Secretary: "Had that person's Oligarchy died with him, [the stanzas] would have been suppressed; as it is, I am aware of nothing in the manner of his death or of his life – to prevent the free expression of the opinions of all to whom his whole existence was consumed in endeavouring to enslave. […] [A]nd as to lamenting his death, it will be time enough when Ireland has

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given that Castlereagh had committed suicide by cutting his throat, is the depiction of him as a "Spout / Of blood and water" (9.50).[212] Before his suicide, this expression might have been read as a reference to him spilling others' (instead of his own) blood, e.g. during his suppression of the Irish Rebellion in 1798. The additional reading that is conferred upon the image after his suicide, however, seems much more plausible given that liquids emanate *from* spouts. Nevertheless, the annotation at first sight seems to forestall the interpretation that this expression in any way alludes to the manner of Castlereagh's death: "This was written long before the suicide of that person" (*Don Juan* 9.49n; *CPW* 5: 740).

The information given in the annotation seems to be correct, even though the claim that the stanzas were written *long* before Castlereagh's suicide is clearly an overstatement. Rather, it appears that Byron was just finishing his draft of the ninth canto when he learned of the incident; this is also what McGann suggests in his commentary on the annotation (cf. editor's n in *CPW* 5: 740).[213] The expression "Spout / Of blood and water" appears exactly like this

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ceased to mourn for his birth. As a Minister, I, for one of millions, looked upon him as the most despotic in intention and the weakest in intellect that ever tyrannized over a country. […] [I]f a poor radical devil such as Waddington or Watson had cut his throat, he would have been buried in a cross-road, with the usual appurtenances of the stake and mallet. […] It may at least serve as some Consolation to the Nations, that their Oppressors are not happy, and in some instances judge so justly of their own actions as to anticipate the sentence of mankind" (*Don Juan* 6, preface; *CPW* 5: 296).

212 The expression is most likely an allusion to Thomas Moore's short poem "What's My Thought Like?", which explains that Castlereagh is like a pump because he is "a slender thing of wood / That up and down its awkward arm doth sway / And coolly spout and spout and spout away, / In one weak, washy, everlasting flood" (T. Moore, *Poetical Works* 177).

213 Castlereagh died on 12 August 1822. On 8 August 1822 Byron had sent a letter to Thomas Moore, telling him that he had just begun to write the ninth canto of *Don Juan* (cf. *BLJ* 9: 191). On 24 August he had nearly finished it, and on 9 September he sent the manuscript to England (cf. *BLJ* 9: 195; 204). The first time that Byron mentions Castlereagh's death in a letter is on 27 August 1822 (cf. *BLJ* 9: 197). It is likely that Byron learnt about Castlereagh's suicide from *Galignani's Messenger*, the newspaper he subscribed to while he was in Italy. *Galignani's* first reported the occurrence on 17 August 1822 (no. 2327) (cf. "Melancholy Death of the Marquis of Londonderry"). Evidence from Byron's letters shows that it usually took the newspaper eleven or twelve days to reach him from Paris, perhaps even a bit less if we assume that he did not write the letters in which he refers to *Galignani's* on the exact same day on which he received the newest issue. For instance, in a letter from 4 December 1821 he mentions an article about him and Napoleon being the "greatest examples of human vanity", which appeared on 22 November 1821 (*BLJ* 9: 74). Another example is a letter from 1 March 1822 referring to a review of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, which appeared in the issue of 17 February 1822 (cf. *BLJ* 9: 117). This suggests that he would have seen the article on Castlereagh's suicide around 23 or 24 August 1822, i.e.

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in the manuscript; there are no traces that Byron first wrote something else and then, after he had learnt of Castlereagh's suicide, introduced this allusion to it (cf. Cochran, *Facsimile of Prisoner of Chillon and Don Juan IX* 120–21). The annotation does not appear in the manuscript, which again supports the claim that Byron indeed wrote the stanza while Castlereagh was alive and then later added the annotation after word about his death reached him.

Contemporary readers did, of course, not know this. They only knew that the stanza was published *a whole year* after the Foreign Secretary's suicide. A reviewer in *The Literary Gazette* (no. 346, Sept. 1823), quite understandably, even openly accuses Byron of lying in the note:

> We are told a falsehood, by way of apology to an indignant world, for the unmanly way he has spoken of Lord Castlereagh; and the falsehood is, that the expressions were used before that nobleman's deplorable death. This is baser than using the expressions. ("Review of *Don Juan*, Cantos 9–11" 563)

Thus, given the long time between the composition of the stanzas and their publication, it is almost impossible to interpret the annotation as a straightforward defence of having included the attack against Castlereagh after his suicide and as an attempt to disavow the more conceivable (and tactless) interpretation of the "Spout / Of Blood and Water". First of all, it is not clear what the "This" in "This was written long before the suicide of that person" refers to. Since the annotation is anchored at the very beginning of the passage – in stanza 49, ten lines before the risky expression in stanza 50 – it can, theoretically, be read as only referring to the lines that ridicule Castlereagh's speeches rather than the lines that might be interpreted as alluding to his suicide. The anchoring of the annotation and the referential ambiguity of "This" hence leave open whether the whole passage on Castlereagh or only the more innocent portion of it was written before his death. Contemporary readers, who did not possess the information on the composition history of canto nine that we do, could understand it either way. More importantly, however, even *if* readers assumed that Byron indeed wrote the entire passage before Castlereagh's suicide, his defence is still extremely lackadaisical.

The annotation pretends that the passage exists in two different time frames: that of the *composition* of the stanzas before Castlereagh's death and

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when he was just finishing the ninth canto. For other instances in which Byron drew on news reported or reprinted in *Galignani's*, see Stabler, *Byron, Poetics and History* chapter 5. For the importance of *Galignani's Messenger* for nineteenth-century travellers on the continent, see Cooper-Richet, "Distribution, diffusion et circulation du *Galignani's Messenger* (1814–1890)".

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that of the *publication* of the poem a year later. The note either appears to suggest that (1) the lines, once written, could not be changed or that, (2) even though they *could* have been altered, they did not have to be because Byron's original intention at the time of composition mattered (i.e. to satirise a living politician), not the context in which readers would approach these lines after Castlereagh's death. Of course, neither argument is particularly plausible. Readers knew that there was both enough time to rewrite or omit the passage and that Byron could not expect of them to completely erase the memory of Castlereagh's suicide from their minds when approaching these lines.[214]

There is hence a stark contrast between the apparent and the ulterior function of the annotation. The information that it provides about the composition history of the lines is deliberately unconvincing as a defence. Instead of mitigating the insult of the lines and of vindicating the stanzas, the note actually draws attention to, and revels in, their offensiveness. The half-hearted annotation dismisses readers' possible objections against the passage as overly squeamish. What the annotation signals is: 'Yes, I know that I could and should have changed it, but I deliberately left it as it is.' The annotation hence serves as yet another jibe at Castlereagh's memory and at those who feel the (in Byron's eyes unjustified) need to protect it.

3.4.3 *Plagiarism and* (*Dis*)*Owning Literary Sources in* Marino Faliero

In chapter 3.2.2.1, I discussed an annotation in which Byron attempts (among other things) to forestall accusations of having plagiarised from Coleridge's *Christabel* (cf. *Siege* 476n; *CPW* 3: 486). A similar note – this time regarding Lady Morgan's *Italy* –appears in the appendix for *The Two Foscari* (cf. *CPW* 6: 222). Such precautions were necessary, given the eagerness of literary reviews to discuss potential cases of unoriginality and theft (see chapter 3.2.2.1). While Byron's notes on Coleridge and Lady Morgan are sincere defences against such charges, the annotation that will be discussed here only *pretends* to be trying to forestall accusations of plagiarism while actually poking fun at readers who

214 One can contrast the preservation of the lines against Castlereagh (published by Byron's new, radical publisher John Hunt) with the omission of a passage that makes fun of Sir Samuel Romilly's suicide, which was meant to appear in canto 1 of *Don Juan* (published by the more cautious and conservative John Murray). Murray had written to Byron about the stanza, advising him to "modify or substitute others for, the lines on Romilly whose death should save him" (Murray 273; cf. also 274n2). Against Byron's explicit orders to keep the passage as it was (cf. *BLJ* 6: 167), Murray omitted the whole stanza and instead printed two rows of asterisks. The stanza was only included in *Don Juan* after Byron's death. (Byron hated Romilly because he believed that Romilly had accepted to become his lawyer in the separation from his wife only to suddenly change sides and represent Lady Byron. For what had actually happened, see Cochran, *Byron's Romantic Politics* 203–04.)

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might bring them forward. The annotated passage occurs towards the end of *Marino Faliero*, shortly before the protagonist's execution:

> ONE OF THE TEN: Thou tremblest, Faliero!
> DOGE: 'Tis with age, then. (*Marino Faliero* 5.3.7–8)

The annotation reads as follows:

> This was the actual reply of Bailli, maire of Paris, to a Frenchman who made him the same reproach on his way to execution, in the earliest part of their revolution. I find in reading over (since the completion of this tragedy), for the first time these six years, "Venice Preserved," a similar reply on a different occasion by Renault, and other coincidences arising from the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental, from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the closet as Otway's chef d'œuvre. (*Marino Faliero* 5.3.8n; *CPW* 4: 561)

The note suggests two sources for Faliero's proud retort: a historical one, which was deliberately used by Byron, and a literary one, which he (allegedly) employed unconsciously. The reference to the historical source is rather straightforward (though Jean Sylvain Bailly was actually killed during the terror of 1793, not at the very beginning of the revolution), and the anecdote seems to have been fairly well-known and is, for instance, recorded in the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* (Aug. 1795, cf. "Afflicting Incidents" 119).

The reference to the second source is more difficult to unravel. At the beginning ("I find in reading over …"), the line of argument is still convincing. It appears that Byron finished writing *Marino Faliero* without thinking about Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682) and only afterwards discovered that Faliero's answer echoes Renault's and that there are several other "coincidences arising from the subject" (given that both plays are concerned with a failed plot to overturn the state in the Republic of Venice).[215] Up to this point, the note still seems to be a sincere attempt to forestall unwarranted accusations of plagiarism. The last sentence of the note, however, makes clear that this is not the case; the sudden twist is already hinted at in the ironic address to the "gentlest reader". What follows is *not* a protestation that Faliero's retort was exclusively inspired by the incident revolving around the mayor of Paris, or that the quote from Otway lingered somewhere hidden in Byron's mind and was

215 The lines that are echoed in *Marino Faliero* occur in Otway's *Venice Preserved* at 3.2.297–98. For a discussion of the similarities and differences between Byron's and Otway's two tragedies, see Jump, "A Comparison of *Marino Faliero* with Otway's *Venice Preserved*".

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used by him unconsciously, or that it is just yet another proof that great minds think alike. Instead, Byron argues that the allusion must be accidental because it is so easy to detect. This ironic argument is markedly nonsensical because it jumbles together two contradictory defences that, each by itself, would indeed be convincing. One can either not be accused of plagiarising if one is unaware that someone else has already written something similar[216] *or* if one can rely on the fact that the source one is alluding to is so well-known that readers will immediately know that the words are not one's own. (For instance, no one could be accused of stealing when including "To be, or not to be" in a text without identifying the source.) What Byron's note does, in combining these two arguments, is similar to saying: 'I included the words "To be, or not to be" in my text, but it is not plagiarism because I did not know that Shakespeare also wrote this *and* because I knew that everyone is so familiar with these words by Shakespeare that all readers would immediately identify the reference'. The two defences hence preclude each other because one of them presupposes that Byron believed that everyone would be able to detect the unmarked reference, which, in turn, would mean that he was indeed aware of the source and that there is nothing "accidental" in the similarity between *Marino Faliero* and *Venice Preserved*.

A contributing factor to the markedness of this mock-defence is the fact that the annotation suggests that – as in the note on Castlereagh's suicide discussed above – the text could have been changed to avoid accusations but that it was deliberately kept as it is. If we, for a moment, credit Byron's unconvincing explanation that he was unaware of the parallels between *Marino Faliero* and *Venice Preserved* and that he detected them after composing but *before publishing* the work, he could easily have forestalled charges of plagiarism. For instance, he could simply have drawn readers' attention to the similarities between the two plays in the preface to his tragedy. As in the annotation on Castlereagh in *Don Juan*, this note does not so much defend the text but instead even draws attention to a problematic element in it that the author deliberately left unaltered. It starts out as a seemingly genuine defence but quickly turns into a mock-defence.

But what functions, then, does this mock-defensive note serve? First of all, Byron points readers to the historical and literary sources of the line and, to

216 For example, a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* that (in May 1818, several years before the publication of *Marino* Faliero) defended Byron against charges of plagiarism, argued: "For surely, if a Plagiary be […] one who endeavours the clandestine appropriation of a borrowed thought; if allowed to be unconscious of its pre-existence, he cannot with much propriety be accused of stealing it" ("Lord Byron Vindicated" 390).

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a lesser extent, the influence of *Venice Preserved* on his tragedy as a whole. In doing so, the note indeed tries to forestall accusations of plagiarism because it acknowledges the debt to Otway, though in a very roundabout, ironic way, which downplays the importance of Byron's literary model. That Otway's tragedy was definitely on Byron's mind even before he started to compose his own work (rather than after having finished it, as the note claims) is shown by his correspondence. Byron was already thinking about *Marino Faliero* in connection with *Venice Preserved* in 1817, i.e. four years prior to the publication of his tragedy (cf. *BLJ* 5: 203; Murray 206). While he was just finishing *Marino Faliero*, he yet again referred to Otway in a letter to his publisher Murray and Ugo Foscolo: "Shakespeare and Otway have a million advantages over me […] let me then preserve the only one which I could possibly have – that – of having been at Venice – and entered into the local Spirit of it" (*BLJ* 7: 194). The nonsensical (and, based on this evidence, disingenuous) defence in the note thus allows Byron to shift the focus away from the literary source itself to the manner in which he avows it.

Hence, the annotation – both by its ironic tone with regard to plagiarism and the fact that it only refers to Otway in the context of one specific line rather than the tragedy as a whole – allows Byron to characterise *Marino Faliero* not as an imitation of Otway's tragedy but as a historical play based on facts and scholarly works.[217] The focus on history and factuality is emphasised by the lengthy preface and the numerous appendices in which Byron compares and evaluates different accounts of Marino Faliero's downfall by various historians and justifies why he chose to adhere to a certain version of the story. The tragedy is thus framed by historical documents, and its literary source is relegated to a brief, puzzling, and ironic endnote. On a broader scale, the annotation

217 The fact that the annotation only refers to one line whereas there are parallels to *Venice Preserved* throughout the drama was noted in a review published in the *Literary Gazette* (iss. 223, 28 Apr. 1821). The reviewer complains that *Marino Faliero* is "neither more nor less than a remodification of Venice Preserved. The action, the characters, the catastrophe, are nearly the same". The persons in the tragedy, "if not individually, do collectively repeat all the sentiments of the dramatis personæ of Otway; and upon this point of resemblance, the author, who is precise in acknowledging the *minutest* obligations, treats us with the following exquisite piece of irony [the reviewer then quotes the note]". The review does not comment on the contradictoriness of Byron's defence and mainly objects to the argument that obvious plagiarism is no plagiarism at all: "For ourselves, we know not what the gentlest reader may be inclined to credit; but we must declare that if any writer can be allowed to plunder another in the way Lord Byron has plundered Otway, and plead in defence that the robbery was committed in open day, we may as well concede at once, that barefaced depredation in literature is not a cognizable crime" ("Review of *Marino Faliero*" 260, original emphasis).

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pokes fun at the contemporary discourse on plagiarism. It can be read both as a parody on notes that offer similarly unconvincing explanations and as a satire on readers' and reviewers' fondness for detecting literary thefts.

3.4.4 *Inventing Reception, or: Byron Imitating the* Dunciad*s*

The last note that I will discuss here shows Byron attempting to mimic one main strategy of Pope's *Dunciad*s. In his satire, Pope frequently records the reactions of his enemies to the poem and its notes, and reprints (sometimes faithfully, sometimes not) their often-whimsical corrections. For instance, an annotation at the beginning of the second book reads:

> Edmund Curl [sic] stood in the pillory at Charing-cross, in March 1727–8. Mr. Curl loudly complained of this note, as an untruth; protesting 'that he stood in the pillory, not in March, but in February.' And of another on ver. 152. saying, 'he was not tossed in a *Blanket*, but a *Rug.*' Curliad, duodecimo, 1729, p. 19, 25. (*Dunciad* 2.3n, original emphasis)

Both objections can indeed be found in Curll's *Curliad*, and Pope uses them to ridicule his enemy even further: they prove that Curll – the notorious publisher of pirate copies and pornography – has no moral compass whatsoever. He is not ashamed of the misdeeds for which he had to stand in the pillory and was tossed in a rug but is outraged when Pope gets minor details about these punishments wrong.

In one of his annotations on *EBSR*, Byron – at first sight – pursues a very similar strategy of including the reaction of one of his enemies in order to expand (and justify) his attack against him. The note is appended to a passage on historian Henry Hallam:

> And classic HALLAM, much renowned for Greek.
> . . . . . .
> Known be thy name! unbounded be thy sway!
> Thy HOLLAND'S banquets shall each toil repay;
> While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes,
> To HOLLAND'S hirelings, and to Learning's foes.
> . . . . . .
> See honest HALLAM lay aside his fork,
> Resume his pen, review his Lordship's work,
> And grateful for the dainties on his plate,
> Declare his landlord can at least translate! (*EBSR* 513; 518–21; 548–51)

Byron's annotation reads as follows (the second paragraph was only added in the second edition of *EBSR*):

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> Mr. Hallam reviewed Payne Knight's Taste, and was exceedingly severe on some Greek verses therein: it was not discovered that the lines were Pindar's till the press rendered it impossible to cancel the critique, which still stands an everlasting monument of Hallam's ingenuity.
>
> The said Hallam is incensed, because he is falsely accused, seeing that he never dineth at Holland House. – If this be true, I am sorry – not for having said so, but on his account, as I understand his Lordship's feasts are preferable to his compositions. – If he did not review Lord Holland's performance, I am glad, because it must have been painful to read, and irksome to praise it. If Mr. Hallam will tell me who did review it, the real name shall find a place in the text, provided nevertheless the said name be of two orthodox musical syllables, and will come into the verse: till then, Hallam must stand for want of a better. (*EBSR* 513n; *CPW* 1: 408)

The beginning of the second paragraph at first sight seems to closely imitate Pope (the archaic verb form "dineth" even directly evokes Scriblerus's style in the *Dunciad*s). Byron's annotation insinuates that Hallam is more concerned with a minor mistake in the satire – the claim that he dines at Holland House – and less with the major accusations regarding his sycophancy and scholarly incompetence.

The problem is that, unlike Curll in the case of the *Dunciad*s, Hallam never seems to have reacted to *EBSR*.[218] Neither Thomas Moore, nor E. H. Coleridge, nor Jerome McGann in their respective editions of Byron's poetry mention any evidence that Hallam was "incensed" at the lines and note (cf. T. Moore, *Works of Byron* 7: 255; E. H. Coleridge *Works of Byron* 1: 337; McGann, *CPW* 1: 408–09). And William Bates (who offers a rather long discussion of Byron and Hallam's relationship, and meticulously cites articles about the fact that Hallam was not the reviewer of Payne Knight's *Taste*) does not provide any proof that Hallam reacted to *EBSR* but simply seems to take Byron's word for it: "Hallam, himself, was wroth at the imputation, and remonstrated with the satirist" (Bates 432). I have searched everywhere in contemporary reviews, newspaper articles, memoirs, and letters but could not find any evidence that Hallam tried to correct Byron's misstatements. All of this gives reason to suspect that Byron simply invented a reaction that best served his satirical purposes and that could be used to evoke the *Dunciad*s. Hence, the note is an intertextual reference rather than a record of the poem's reception or of Byron's flippant reaction to this reception. Due to the enduring popularity of the *Dunciad*s in Byron's age (see

218 He was not the author of the review on Payne Knight's *Taste* either. The actual reviewer was John Allen, the librarian of Lord and Lady Holland. It is usually suggested that Byron just misheard Allen's name and assumed that it must refer to Hallam (cf. Bates 433).

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chapter 2.1.3), it is probable that many readers would indeed have understood the allusion.

The fact that the annotation is most likely based on a lie has several ramifications for *EBSR* as a whole. Like the mock-defensive notes about Castlereagh and Byron's 'non-plagiarism' from Otway's *Venice Preserved* (see above), the present annotation does not serve as a justification or qualification of the satire but rather enhances its offensiveness – by fabricating Hallam's reaction, by refusing to apologise for having falsely claimed that Hallam praises Lord Holland in exchange for dinner invitations, and by continuing to ridicule Hallam and Holland. Like Pope's manipulated annotations (chapter 2.2.2), this note raises questions about the trustworthiness of Byron's notes on *EBSR* as a whole and about the factual basis of the entire satire. Does Byron attack actual dunces for their real misdeeds and shortcomings, or does he take more or less inoffensive people and (with a considerable disregard for truth) turn them into duncical types that have little to do with their real-life models?[219]

Yet again – like Pope's manipulated annotations and evaluative notes that can be both read as sincere defences and as increasing the offensiveness of the annotated passages (chapter 2.4) –, this note also casts doubt on the motivation of Byron's satire as well as on his authorial ethos. Is Byron a justified satirist who feels compelled to save art and scholarship from incompetent hacks, or does he merely enjoy randomly attacking other writers? The doubt about Byron's 'noble objectives' is further intensified by the fact that, unlike Pope's annotations, Byron's provide little justification for his satire against the victims of *EBSR*. As shown above, some of his notes assert that he knows next to nothing about the people he is attacking (see the "Interlude", p. 219ff.), and the present note even claims that Byron's victims are interchangeable because he will gladly insert the name of the real reviewer of Lord Holland's poetry into the poem "provided […] the said name be of two orthodox musical syllables".

Though Byron's *EBSR* is much more light-hearted (and much less elaborate) than the *Dunciad*s, both works make readers wonder whether their authors are moral satirists or simply witty libellers. *EBSR* contains many references to the *Dunciads* (see p. 44 above), but it is in this note that Byron comes closest to imitating his great idol Pope, even if he has to make up Hallam's reaction in order to be able to do so.

219 For this problem in the *Dunciad*s, see A. L. Williams 60–76.

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Conclusion

As in Pope's evaluative notes, one can find a considerable degree of playfulness and equivocality in Byron's – both in imagining readers' reception of his poems and in employing apparently defensive notes for ulterior, even diametrically opposite, functions than the one they appear to have. In "Lachin Y Gair", the annotated passage (and poem) itself is not ambiguous at all. It only becomes so when the note directly contradicts the main text and suggests that the adult speaker's sentiments about his childhood in the Highlands are much more ambivalent than the poem itself suggests. The corrective note hence retrospectively ambiguates the whole work. In Byron's annotation on Castlereagh, the supposedly defensive function of the note is counteracted by its deliberate implausibility, based on contemporary readers' knowledge that Byron had more than enough time to simply alter or omit the offensive passage. And in his note about Otway's *Venice Preserved*, Byron uses an intentionally convoluted and nonsensical defence to both acknowledge and facetiously downplay his debt to Otway, as well as to mock readers' eagerness to detect plagiarisms. In the notes on Castlereagh and Otway, Byron thus turns his supposed qualifications into further attacks; he pretends to take readers' possible objections seriously only to ridicule them. Lastly, in *EBSR*, Byron's fabrication of Hallam's reaction serves to ambiguate the entire poem and transforms the supposedly corrective annotation into an intertextual allusion to Pope's *Dunciad*s. These four notes are hence yet another testament to how playfully Byron evokes, transforms, violates, and subverts the conventions of xenographic annotations. His elaborate strategies in these notes are not primarily designed to either genuinely defend his poems or to parody such defensive annotations. Rather, his authorial notes change the meaning of his works ("Lachin Y Gair"), emphasise certain important aspects of them (*Don Juan, Marino Faliero*, *EBSR*), and also serve Byron's self-presentation as a sceptic who does not get carried away by folklore but recognises the importance of historical facts, as a witty and provocative satirist, and as a self-confident writer who ridicules readers who demand justifications for dangerous passages and who are eager to accuse authors of plagiarism.

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CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

> [T]o read [the *Dunciad*s apparatus] all through will be worth no one's while[.] […] [N]otes are not necessary: the poetry doesn't depend upon them in any essential respect. (Leavis 88)

> The discerning reader – the reader to whom Pope wishes to appeal, or if not to appeal to, then to create – should know or learn better than to duplicate the unsavory games of the dunces in Book II by spending too much time diving down into the notes[.] (Rudy, *Literature and Encyclopedism in Enlightenment Britain* 67–68)

> For these poets [Byron, Erasmus Darwin, Southey, Coleridge], the notes purport to make sense of, or unravel, the mysteries inherent in the verse; a voice emerges that is more authoritative, less overtly imaginative – more factual. The authority contained in the notes enabled the poet: his imagery is substantiated, his poetry justified. For the (male) poet […], the notes perform the historian's function[.] (Labbe, "'Transplanted into More Congenial Soil'" 72)

According to the quotes by F. R. Leavis and Seth Rudy, Pope's self-annotations hardly deserve any closer look. Pope's notes, in their view, do not add anything to the meaning(s) of the *Dunciad*s and mainly serve to show the poet's distaste for annotations as a whole. And Jacqueline Labbe, while stressing the importance of Byron's notes for his works, insists that they generally perform the (explanatory, disambiguating) functions that one would also expect xenographic notes to fulfil.

As my analysis of Pope's and Byron's notes has shown, these arguments are untenable. Pope's notes are not chiefly designed to parody the entire discourse tradition of annotations, nor are Byron's primarily concerned with providing straightforward, factual information to substantiate his poems. Rather, both poets use their annotations in a variety of highly creative ways that enrich, qualify, proliferate, and even challenge the meaning(s) of their works. Pope and Byron employ the inherently ambiguous discourse tradition of self-annotation in order to ambiguate specific passages, entire poems, and even their œuvre and public image as a whole. Their works hence contain many prime examples

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of how authorial annotations use and create ambiguity for a great variety of aesthetic, rhetorical, and social purposes. Pope's and Byron's notes are an integral part of their works, and studying them yields new insights into long-contested questions such as 'why do some scholars read the *Dunciad*s as pessimistic works that deplore the downfall of learning and culture, while others interpret them as cheerfully engaging in rather inconsequential fights with harmless dunces?' as well as 'why do some readers insist that Byron's works give them a direct glimpse at his innermost feelings, whereas others see him as a mere poseur and sly manipulator of his public persona?'. (For these questions and my answers to them, see chapter 2.3.4, chapter 3.2.1, and chapter 3.2.2.) Such inquiries hint at the profound impact that Pope's and Byron's annotations have on the meanings of their works. Yet, until now, their notes have for the most part not received the critical attention they deserve.

James McLaverty calls Pope "one of the great literary annotators" (McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* 209). This high regard for Pope's authorial notes is fully warranted. As I have shown in chapter 2.1.1., the extensiveness and complexity of the annotations in the *Dunciad*s is without precedent in earlier self-annotated literature. They shed light on some of the central aspects of Pope's great satire – his ambiguous self-presentation, his wavering between personal and general satire, his ambivalence about the question how dangerous the dunces really are, as well as the half-moralising, half-playfully amoral motivation of his satire. Moreover, Pope's annotations in the *Dunciad*s draw our attention to the 'mutually beneficial' enmity between him and the dunces, in which both sides used a constant back-and-forth of insults and accusations to collect material and garner publicity for their works. Pope's notes also attest to the utmost care with which he designed and revised his satire (and sometimes manipulated his duncical sources) to sometimes push readers in one specific direction of interpretation (all the while denying this very interpretation) or, more often, to render it altogether impossible for readers to arrive at a conclusive, unequivocal understanding of his work. The annotations hence show Pope's penchant for engaging in interpretative cat-and-mouse games with his audiences.

Among all of Pope's self-annotations, those in the *Dunciad*s are the most numerous, use the widest range of textual strategies, and perform the greatest variety of functions. However, his other self-annotated poems also offer a rich potential for investigation that has remained untapped here. Especially intriguing in these are his attempts at self-presentation and social networking (e.g. in the *Pastorals*, *Essay on Criticism*, *To Arbuthnot*, *To Bathurst*, and *Epilogue to the Satires II*), his use of annotations as a place where he can react to the reception of his poems (especially in *Essay on Criticism* and *To Arbuthnot*), and

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his recording of textual variants (e.g. in the *Pastorals, Essay on Criticism*, and *Windsor Forest*).

Pope's *Dunciad*s established self-annotations as an almost obligatory feature of satiric poetry for the next one hundred years to come. And by the 1790s, among newly published English poems of *all* genres, those with self-annotations even slightly outnumbered those without (see p. 79 above). In 1811, Byron went so far as to conclude that notes were the "modern indispensables" of poetry (*BLJ* 2: 99). Though this was meant as a facetious remark, his own œuvre attests to the fact that annotations played an immense role in how poets of the Romantic age constructed their public image and engaged with their audiences. Byron's various self-presentations – be it that of the widely-travelled adventurer, the aristocratic rake, the brooding, heartbroken Byronic hero, or the self-ironic anti-romantic – all relied to a considerable degree on his self-annotations. His notes also prove that his tendency for self-contradiction, self-subversion, as well as for juxtaposing the serious and the comical long predates *Don Juan*. In fact, those features can be found as early as in "Lachin Y Gair" (1807), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), *The Waltz* (1813), and *The Giaour* (1813). As I have shown, one of the most central ambiguities of Byron's œuvre – the potentially autobiographical nature of his works – also heavily depends on his annotations. These provide tantalising half-revelations about his private life, use a variety of strategies to give different readerships either the feeling that they are being let into the author's secrets or that they are being barred from learning more about them, and sometimes also cast doubt on the autobiographical foundation of his works altogether.

4.1 Pope and Byron – Similarities and Differences

Byron's almost boundless admiration for Pope and the immense impact that Pope's *Dunciad*s had on Romantic-era satirical self-annotations has repeatedly led scholars to conclude that Byron's annotations often closely imitate those of his idol.[1] Yet, as I have argued, the textual strategies in, and functions of, Pope's and Byron's notes differ to such an extent that a straightforward step-by-step analysis of how Byron's practices of self-annotation follow or deviate from Pope's is impossible. Nevertheless, one can detect several similarities between Pope's and Byron's notes when one moves the focus away from individual annotations and instead concentrates on broader issues. Even in these similarities, however, their very different approaches to self-annotation become obvious.

1 See, for instance, A. Levine 128 and Beaty 67. Also see p. 44 above.

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Firstly, both Pope and Byron are fond of proliferating and destabilising the meanings of their works and, as a consequence, of playing cat-and-mouse games with their readers. Byron mainly uses this strategy when he is both confirming and denying that his poems are autobiographical. Pope primarily employs self-annotations in this way when providing readers with ambiguous information on whether he sees the dunces as posing a serious threat to contemporary culture or just as harmless fools, which in turn, ambiguates the *Dunciad*s with respect to their genre: are they grave moral satires that deplore the downfall of culture and learning, or are they playful, light-hearted satires that are simply designed to ridicule and provoke Pope's personal enemies?

The second similarity is closely related to the first one. Both poets use self-annotations in order to create and subvert their own public image – with Byron wavering between the brooding, melancholic outcast and the cheerful, rakish man of the world, and Pope portraying himself both as a high-minded, virtuous satirist and as a masterful but amoral (if not immoral) libeller.

Thirdly, both Pope and Byron sometimes employ annotations to differentiate between readerships and to create notes that have different meanings for different audiences. Pope, however, relies on this strategy to a lesser extent than Byron. The former's strategies depend on readers' knowledge of classical literature, their ability to decipher contemporary political allusions, and their familiarity with the duncical texts that Pope is (mis)quoting. All three of these fields of knowledge were, at least in theory, available to the general reading public – they do not require insider information about the author's private life. As a consequence, readers are invited to feel as Pope's allies and as sharing his horizon of understanding (and, incidentally, his opinion of the dunces). Pope's interactions with his readers hence mainly focus on provoking responses and on reacting to these responses rather than on making inside jokes and signalling to most readers that they are being excluded from grasping the deeper meaning of certain passages. By contrast, Byron's annotations often insinuate that, in order to fully understand his works, readers require a certain familiarity with his private life – one that many of them did not (and could not) have. Thus, the majority of readers is given the impression that they are overhearing parts of a private conversation that they cannot completely comprehend. They are (allegedly) let into some of Byron's secrets but are barred from learning other, more weighty ones. Byron's notes hence put a strong focus on partly excluding certain readerships, thereby whetting their appetite for insider information on his private life.

Fourthly, related to the point above, Pope's and Byron's annotations often explicitly anticipate or react to readers' responses to their works. In Byron's notes, however, we find much less communication with actual readers, though

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he sometimes also reacts to the reception of his poems. He is mainly concerned with imagining readers' *possible* reactions. By contrast, Pope's *Dunciad*s thrive on incorporating readers' actual responses and always seek to provoke new ones. There is a constant back and forth between Pope and his real-life readers. The notes of both Pope and Byron notes are hence employed in a process of communication with various actual and fictional readerships.

Fifthly, both authors ambiguate their works with respect to the question whether they are general or personal satires. Pope mainly achieves this through his references to Le Bossu and the fact that, from edition to edition, he substitutes some dunces for others. And Byron, though to a much lesser extent than Pope, sometimes stresses the interchangeability of his victims by claiming that he only chose their names because they suited his metre and rhyme.

Sixthly, both Pope and Byron employ fictional editor personas to further complicate and ambiguate the meanings of their works. The *Dunciad*s prominently feature Martinus Scriblerus and the fictionalised version of real-life scholar Richard Bentley as 'editors', while Byron employs the persona of the printer's devil in *The Waltz, Beppo*, and *Don Juan*, as well as that of the 'European traveller' in *The Giaour*. In the *Dunciad*s, Scriblerus and (from 1742 onwards) Bentley can be found on almost every page of the work; Byron's works – with the exception of *The Giaour* – use fictional annotators much more sparingly.[2] Byron's printer's devil is similar to Scriblerus and Bentley as readers cannot be sure whether they should read him as the author's ironic mouthpiece or as the naive butt of his joke. Nevertheless, in contrast to many of the notes signed by Bentley and Scriblerus in which it is not clear what attitude Pope adopts towards the utterances of his 'annotators' (e.g. approval or ridicule), the printer's devil's notes allow readers to grasp quite easily what purposes Byron has in mind for them. Furthermore, while the notes of Scriblerus and Bentley ambiguate the *Dunciad*s in their entirety, the contributions of the printer's devil mainly ambiguate the smaller sections of the text to which they are appended, while also sometimes reinforcing certain aspects of the annotated text as a whole. In *The Giaour*, things lie differently. Here, the fictional annotator is used to ambiguate the entire work, and it is not at all clear how one should interpret Byron's attitude towards this persona. The *Dunciad*s and *The Giaour* use very different strategies of rendering their annotator personas ambiguous – the former employing contradictory and ambiguous textual evidence on Scriblerus's

2 It should be noted that in *The Giaour* it is only the very last note on the poem that reveals that the annotations (and some of the passages in the poem) can be attributed to this fictional 'European editor' in the first place (see p. 242 above). In other words, the presence of the annotator persona remains hidden for most of the work.

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and Bentley's opinions, intelligence, and use of irony, whereas the latter presents the European editor as both a sombre (even melodramatic) man of feeling in the poem and as a carefree, blasé joker in the notes. The purposes for which the *Dunciad*s and *The Giaour* employ their ambiguous fictional annotators are similar to a certain degree: both works use them to ambiguate the author's self-presentation, his stance towards his work as well as towards the world in general. In both cases, the notes attributed to the fictional annotator persona raise the question whether the work at hand expresses the real-life author's facetious, optimistic worldview, or a dejected, pessimistic one, or a mix of both. In all cases discussed here – Scriblerus, Bentley, the printer's devil, and the European editor – the attribution of a note to a fictional annotator is not simply a transparent play on authorship or a parody of xenographic editions. Rather, these signed notes and the apparent distance between author and annotator serve purposes that unsigned notes could never achieve (e.g., as in *Don Juan*, allowing Byron to remain witty while explaining his own joke).

Lastly, in both Pope and Byron we can find a considerable degree of playfulness and unpredictability. Examples of this include notes that pretend to downplay the offensiveness of certain passages while actually emphasising and revelling in it and annotations that creatively violate and subvert the discourse conventions of xenographic notes. As chapters 2.1.1.1 and 3.1.1 have shown, the wide range of strategies in, and functions of, Pope's and Byron's self-annotations is unmatched by any of their contemporaries. Accordingly, Pope's and Byron's practices of self-annotation give an idea of how diverse this literary discourse tradition is.

This diversity is also, of course, shown in the way in which Pope and Byron fundamentally differ from each other. For one, the ways in which their annotations (explicitly or implicitly) present their sources and the process of their own composition is extremely dissimilar: Pope's notes in the *Dunciad*s, which often underwent multiple revisions over more than a decade, put a strong focus on craft, care, subtleties, and exactly calculated changes between editions. They also meticulously quote (and sometimes strategically misquote) written sources and even provide detailed and accurate bibliographical information. Thus, they emphasise the fact that they are carefully prepared, printed, and published texts. By contrast, Byron's notes – with their loquaciousness and digressiveness – often create the impression of immediacy, spontaneity, and orality. Byron rarely shows great care for written sources and instead either claims to be quoting texts from memory or to rely on his personal experience altogether.

The manner in which Pope and Byron insert their authorial persona into the notes is very different as well. In the *Dunciad*s, we find claims that the

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commentary was not written by Pope himself as well as the feigned (and very transparent) neutrality of the third-person annotators who often comically praise 'their author' and provide biographical information about him. Pope's reliance on quotes (usually from his enemies' works) likewise partly dissociates himself from the content of the notes. However, the way in which these quotes are framed (and sometimes manipulated) makes clear that the choice and evaluation of them is, in fact, highly subjective and biased. In Pope, we can thus usually observe a playful, ironic disavowal of the annotations. In Byron's annotations, by contrast, we can see constant overt authorial self-insertions. In many cases, it is suggested that this inserted voice is that of the 'real' Byron, but there are also a considerable number of notes in which this impression is called into question.

Another aspect in which Pope's and Byron's annotations greatly differ lies in how exactly they relate to the annotated texts. Generally speaking, self-annotations can (1) support the argument of the annotated passage, (2) continue the argument, (3) digress and take it as a starting point to talk about something else entirely, (4) subvert the argument of the annotated passage, or (5) alter it by suggesting that it means something utterly different from what readers would expect. In Pope, there are only a few cases of subversion and almost no cases of digression but many of support, continuation and alteration. By contrast, in Byron, all five cases are to be found, though the last one – alteration – is much less common than the other four.

The difference just mentioned has to do with the fact that, in Pope, the notes are frequently 'triggered' by ambiguities that already exist in the annotated poem itself. As a consequence, his annotations often openly discuss and negotiate the possible meanings of the text. The poem is ambiguous to begin with, and the annotations further add to its ambiguities. In Byron, such overt discussions of existing ambiguities are rare.[3] The ambiguities in his works mainly rely on the interplay between a passage in the poem that is either unambiguous or the ambiguity of which is hidden and an annotation that ambiguates this passage or that makes its concealed equivocality perceptible.

The relation of Pope's and Byron's authorial notes to the discourse tradition of xenographic annotation shows yet another difference between these two authors. Pope often overtly evokes models of xenographic annotation (e.g. in his 'textual critical' notes), while Byron's notes usually hark back to older traditions of self-annotation rather than of editorial annotation. In other words, Pope's notes often (unconvincingly) pretend to be scholarly, xenographic annotations, while the majority of Byron's are unabashedly literary, authorial ones.

3 For an example, see *Don Juan* 15.18n; *CPW* 5: 763.

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As regards the scholarly principles that (in theory) govern xenographic notes, Pope's annotations frequently violate the principle that annotations should be unequivocal. They also sometimes violate the principle of factual correctness. However, they usually adhere to the principles of relevance (with respect to the question raised by the lemma) and of being more concerned with the annotated text than with the annotator himself. In Byron, the principle of correctness is often adhered to, while those of relevance, text-centeredness, and unequivocality are frequently deliberately violated.

Pope and Byron use the discourse tradition of literary self-annotation in very different ways and for vastly different purposes. By doing so, they greatly influence the nature of this tradition itself and the way in which later authors would appropriate it for their own aims.[4] Their notes show how versatile the tradition is and how the inclusion of a single annotation can change the meaning of an entire work. These notes are by no means intended to simply ridicule the practice of annotation, to merely pad a volume, to half-heartedly follow a literary fashion, or to be long-winded scholarly treatises ignored by everyone except nit-pickers trying to see whether authors really knew what they were writing about. Rather, they are an integral part of a work's meaning and deserve to be read and analysed as such. What unites the notes by Pope and Byron, despite all the differences that have just been outlined, are their strategic uses and creations of various kinds of ambiguities.

4.2 Studying Ambiguity in and through Self-Annotations

The concept of ambiguity helps unravel how exactly self-annotations work and what they do to the annotated text. In turn, the discourse tradition of authorial annotations is the perfect context to learn more about authors' strategic employment and production of ambiguity.

Self-annotations lend themselves extremely well to ambiguating endeavours. The first reason for this is that they are inherently ambiguous themselves. As shown throughout this study, self-annotations are equivocal with respect to the discourse tradition that they belong to (both mimicking xenographic ones and being free to violate the rules that govern them), with respect to their enunciatory status (who speaks in them?), their factuality/fictionality, and their (para)textual status. Their inherent ambiguity makes self-annotations a very flexible tool and allows them to interact with the text, the author's

4 For examples of how later writers appropriated and transformed the models of Pope's and Byron's self-annotations, see chapter 2.1.3 and p. 350 n above.

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voice(s), the readers, and the world outside the text in various, even contradictory ways (e.g. acting as a factual explanation outside the text that is spoken by the 'real' author, while simultaneously acting as a fictional aside within the text that is spoken by a fictional persona).

Secondly, by mimicking the older scholarly tradition of xenographic annotations, self-annotations explicitly evoke a paratextual discourse tradition that mainly aims at negotiating the meanings of a passage and even of an entire work in a concise and pointed manner. Put differently: annotations (be they editorial or authorial) are by definition concerned with meaning-making and hence with ambiguity, disambiguation, and ambiguation. The very fact that the content of these self-annotations is presented in the form of a foot- or endnote rather than, for example, as a parenthesis within the main text or as a prologue to the work has a bearing on its meaning and function within the text, as well as on the interplay between this note and the main text. The form – with all the expectations and discourse conventions it evokes – is part of its meaning. Furthermore, the necessity of always crossing the boundary between the main text and the annotation that this sort of paratext entails can be made fruitful – be it for pitting different voices against each other or for including another time strand without having to make this explicit in any other way than by putting one part of the text into a note. Thus, self-annotations are an efficient way of introducing ambiguities that would perhaps be too heavy-handed and longwinded if included in the main text itself. As such, they serve a text's poetic economy by, paradoxically, adding information to it. (For the connection between self-annotations and poetic economy, also see p. 327.)

Lastly, and related to the first two reasons, there seems to be no feature of a literary text in which the interaction of many different ambiguities can be observed in such a confined space as in the case of self-annotations. One (simplified) example from chapter 2.3.4 will suffice: in the *Dunciad*s, it is ambiguous whether the vision of Dulness's triumph is real or merely chimerical because it is depicted as flying out of the ivory gate, which is usually meant to suggest that a dream is false. The respective passages in the poem in which the ivory gate is mentioned are complemented by several annotations signed by two fictional annotator personas that contradict each other. Since other annotations depict both of these personas sometimes as Pope's (serious or ironic) mouthpieces and sometimes as the butt of his jokes, it remains ambiguous which of them (if either) is expressing Pope's own view on the ivory gate. Things are made even more complicated by the fact that the source text that Pope quotes for his use of the ivory gate (book 6 of the *Aeneid*) is ambiguous as well and could suggest that dreams flying though this gate are true or that they are false. We thus see how a global ambiguity is addressed and further ambiguated by means of an

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ambiguous source and of two fictional annotators, towards whom Pope's attitude remains likewise ambiguous. Such strategic co-occurrences of ambiguities can be found throughout both Pope's and Byron's annotations.

The present study has also drawn attention to two further aspects of ambiguity. The first is the importance of the 'ambiguity of ambiguity' for literature in general but especially for satire. The second is connected to the question to what extent Pope (and other Augustan satirists) used ambiguity as a way to avoid legal problems. The 'ambiguity of ambiguity' can be seen in those cases in which readers cannot be sure whether an author is strategically producing ambiguity or whether they are reading more into the text than is actually there. This question whether a passage or work is deliberately ambiguous on the side of the author is often at the very centre of literary analysis. Pope (and, to a lesser extent, Byron) made use of this phenomenon in order to put forward seemingly innocuous statements and denying that there is any hidden, more dangerous meaning behind them, inducing readers to wonder whether the author's insistence on unequivocality is serious or ironic. As regards the legal implications of ambiguity in the Augustan age, chapter 2.1.2 has shown that ambiguity and disambiguation played an important role in eighteenth-century legal discussions over libel and censorship. Based on contemporary law, this chapter also argued that there are at least three annotations in which Pope may have used self-annotations to propose innocuous disambiguations for passages that might otherwise have resulted in him being sued for libel.

In summary, this study has shown that Pope's and Byron's self-annotations do not determine and fix the meaning(s) of their poems. Their notes are usually not employed for purposes of disambiguation but rather proliferate, change, and call into question meaning(s). In short, the authorial notes of these two authors react to ambiguity, employ ambiguity, are ambiguous themselves, and, as a consequence, create further ambiguities.

4.3 Coda: Post-1900 Self-Annotation

Literary self-annotations – first appearing around 1300, made nearly indispensable to satire by the *Dunciad Variorum* in 1729, and enjoying their heyday in the early 1800s – fell out of favour with authors in the second half of the nineteenth century, though they never became completely extinct.[5] They

5 See the 'External Appendix', which lists, among other things, a selection of self-annotated works published between 1830 and 1900: http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434. For a brief introduction to this appendix, see p. 391.

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were later revived by (post-)modernist writers such as James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and David Foster Wallace. In recent years, authorial notes have also made their appearance in popular fantasy literature, e.g. in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series and Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* (cf. Zubarik, "Funny Footnotes" *passim*; Zubarik, *Die Strategie(n) der Fussnote im gegenwärtigen Roman* 55–95; Lehtiö *passim*).

The self-annotations in these (post-)modern works differ from their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors in two ways. For one, in post-1900 literature, self-annotations inevitably come across as unusual, experimental features of a text. And despite Pratchett's and Clarke's use of self-annotations in their bestselling fantasy novels, these kinds of paratexts are today mostly found in high-brow avant-garde literature. By contrast, in Pope's and Byron's times, authorial notes were printed in ephemeral libels and national epics, in mass-appealing adventure stories and complex philosophical poems aimed at niche audiences; they were written by Grub Street hacks and Poet Laureates, by neglected amateurs and bestselling "foolscap, hot-press darling[s]" (*Don Juan* 4.109), by revolutionaries and government propagandists alike. In 1820, Robert Southey even noted that self-annotations "are now become so customary that the poet who goes without them might seem to hold but a low place in public opinion" (Southey, *Coll. Letters* 6: letter 3426). In short, in the 1720s[6] and 1820s, the presence of authorial notes did not make a book stand out on the literary market, nor did it brand a work as particularly self-reflexive, playful, and unconventional, but this is exactly what self-annotations did in the 1920s and continue to do in the 2020s.

The second aspect in which modern self-annotations differ from those in Pope's and Byron's times is the manner in which they relate to the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation. As shown throughout this study, pre-1900 self-annotations used the discourse conventions of scholarly notes in three ways: (1) they could adhere to them and supply readers with helpful, correct information; (2) they could transform these conventions and, for instance, start out as a straightforward explanation but soon digress into an autobiographical anecdote with no relation to the annotated text; and (3) they could violate, subvert and parody these conventions, e.g. by offering deliberately incorrect information or by teasingly refusing to provide readers with any sort of knowledge. The greatest majority of post-1900 self-annotations, however, are exclusively of the latter kind – deliberate subversions and parodies of xenographic annotations. Cases in which they offer readers factual

6 In the case of the *Dunciad*s, it was the sheer number and length of the notes that made the work so unusual, not the presence of self-annotations in general.

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information grounded in the real world are very rare.[7] In other words, the majority of post-1900 self-annotations are rather predictably fictional and playful, whereas many pre-1900 authorial notes offer an exciting mix of the factual and the fictional, the informative and the deliberately digressive, irrelevant, or misleading. Readers approach Nabokov's notes in *Pale Fire* knowing that they are perusing the fictional paratext of a fictional editor who used to be king of a fictional country and who is now supplying fictional information on the poem of a fictional author. By contrast, readers of Pope's *Dunciad*s and, for instance, Byron's *Don Juan* never know what expects them at the bottom of the page or the end of the volume: a factual explanation relating to the real world outside the text; a digressive, personal aside by the actual author; an intentionally incorrect statement; or a mischievous refusal to explain altogether? True, post-1900 self-annotations still pit different voices against each other, playfully subvert the main text, and proliferate its meanings. However, they seem to have lost part of their inherent ambiguities and have become almost entirely structurally integrated into the fictional texts that they are appended to. Their enunciatory status, their fictionality, their relationship to xenographic annotations – all of these aspects have become more of less unequivocal. They are now almost entirely fictional, are spoken by fictional characters, and provide no factual information on the world outside the text. Thus, contrary to Christoph Bode's argument that ambiguity is mainly to be found in (post-)modernist texts, Pope's and Byron's works indicate that – at least as far as self-annotations are concerned – ambiguity may have had its heyday *before* the modernist period (cf. Bode, "The Aesthetics of Ambiguity" 73).

The argument that post-1900 self-annotations are less ambiguous than their precursors is by no means meant to suggest that (post-)modernist self-annotations are unworthy of our attention. But it shows that our (understandable) admiration for the playfulness of a work like Nabokov's *Pale Fire* should not overshadow the captivating intricacies of *pre*-1900 self-annotations. In order to be able to appreciate the discourse tradition of authorial annotation in its full richness and variety, and in order to analyse its diachronic developments,

7 One noteworthy exception to this are T. S. Eliot's annotations on *The Waste Land*. They mostly adhere to the discourse conventions of xenographic annotation – providing factual information and referring to existing sources – but are often seen as parodies of scholarly notes rather than helpful, explanatory comments in their own right. For the controversy over their function, see Bloom 67; Bronstein 172; and Nänny 533. The fact that many readers and scholars insist that Eliot must have been ironic when supplying these notes shows how outlandish the idea that an author might write 'serious', elucidating annotations on his own work had become by the beginning of the twentieth century.

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more studies on the fascinating earlier examples of this tradition are needed. Carefully crafted by authors and eagerly devoured by contemporary audiences, pre-1900 self-annotations deserve the scrutiny of scholars – and the enthusiasm of modern readers.

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Appendix

'External Appendix': Self-Annotated Literary Works 1300–1900

In this study, I not only strove to analyse Pope's and Byron's strategies in, and functions of, self-annotation but also to gain insights into the discourse tradition of self-annotation as a whole. For this reason, I have compiled a collection of more than 1100 self-annotated literary works published between 1300 and 1900 which can be accessed here: http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434.

The aim of this collection is threefold. First of all, it shows the prevalence and variety of literary self-annotation before 1900. While authorial notes in post-1900 literature have already received a considerable amount of critical attention, the number, complexity, and diversity of earlier self-annotations is often underestimated among literary scholars. The present collection strives to correct this view. Secondly, the collection reveals general tendencies in the field of literary self-annotation, e.g. in terms of layout or regarding the question which genres often feature self-annotations. Thirdly and most importantly, this collection is meant to provide an incentive and starting point for further research by laying the (albeit yet insufficient) groundwork for quantitative research, by including a multitude of now-forgotten works, and by citing relevant secondary literature on as many titles as possible.

The collection is available in the following data formats:
- Microsoft Access database (.accdb)
- pdf (complete version)
- pdf (reduced version)
- HTML (complete version)
- HTML (reduced version)
- XML

For more information on the collection, see: https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10900/127071/Lahrsow%20-%20Information%20on%20the%20Collection.pdf?sequence=18&isAllowed=y.

Based on my findings in this collection, the following two appendices will provide a brief overview of the layout choices in self-annotated works in the ages of Pope and Byron.

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The Layout of Self-Annotations in Pope's Age

Around 1700, marginal notes began to fall out of fashion, and footnotes grew more popular.[1] This move from marginal notes to footnotes seems to have been occasioned both by the growing length and number of notes that authors included in their works and by the fact that marginal notes were rather difficult to print (cf. Saby 31; Cahn 103–04; Dürrenmatt, "Glissements de notes" 413). The earliest self-annotated literary works in English to exclusively employ footnotes that I could find are James Scudamore's *Homer à la Mode* and Charles Cotton's *Scarronides* (both 1664), which have been briefly discussed on page 63 above.

Despite the growing preference for footnotes, the placement of self-annotations was still rather diverse at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Of the 46 self-annotated English poems that I found between 1688 and 1728 (Pope's birth and the publication of the first edition of the *Dunciad*s),[2] 32 have footnotes, eight have marginal notes, three have endnotes, two have both marginal notes and footnotes, and one uses a completely different layout (Dryden's *Annus mirabilis*, which prints the annotations below each stanza). I could not find an example of a combination of footnotes and endnotes, which would become quite popular around 1810.

A little bit further into the eighteenth century, the layout became more and more conventionalised: between 1717 and 1728, all of the self-annotated English poems I found have footnotes. Based on this evidence, I agree with Robert Connors who argues that "[b]y 1720 footnotes were a standard system, and marginal notes became rarer and rarer" (Connors 32). Almost all self-annotated English poems that I found between 1729 (when the *Dunciad Variorum* was

1 Even though most annotations before 1700 were printed as marginal notes (cf. Slights, "Edifying Margins" 684–85), marginalia were not used exclusively: Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* was published with endnotes after each 'month', whereas Cowley's *Davideis* and *Pindaric Odes* have both marginal notes and endnotes. Jonson's *Hymenaei* and *Part of King James His Royall and Magnificent Entertainment* feature a combination of marginal notes and footnotes.

2 I chose 1728 rather than 1729 (when the first extensively annotated version of the *Dunciad*s appeared) as the end date of this brief overview because I wanted to see whether Pope's layout follows or deviates from the layout that was common *before* the *Dunciad Variorum*. In the year of its publication (and later), the *Dunciad Variorum* sparked so many self-annotated responses and imitations that the inclusion of works published in 1729 in this overview would tell us much more about the *Dunciad*s' influence on the layout of other works than about the influence of earlier works on the layout of the *Dunciad*s.

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published) and 1744 (the year of Pope's death) likewise feature footnotes.[3] In their layout, Pope's *Dunciad*s thus both follow the standard of their age and – one dare assume, given their great influence on later self-annotated poetry – helped to cement this standard even further. Between 1729 and 1800, I found 257 self-annotated English poems; an overwhelming 223 of them use footnotes, 17 use endnotes, nine use a combination of footnotes and endnotes, one uses footnotes and marginal notes, one uses only marginal notes, three use a completely different layout, and for three there is no information available because I could not find a digitised version of the works. (For more information, see the 'External Appendix' above.)

Pope had complete control over the layout of his *Dunciad*s; hence, all design choices can be attributed to him rather than the printer (cf. Winn 97).[4] The fact that the whole layout of the *Dunciad*s resembles that of Schrevelius's variorum editions and Brossette's Boileau edition (see p. 49 and p. 57 above) can hence be seen as a deliberate reference to these works with their voluminous apparatuses of xenographic annotations.

It is noteworthy that most pirate editions of the *Dunciad*s retain Pope's annotations, and some of them use a design that imitates or at least closely resembles that of the authorised version:

> Four editions (the Dob, both Hubbard, and the Edinburgh one of Book IV) retained the double columns, the resulting short lines, and a smaller type size for the notes than the poetry above but, of course, all on a narrower page. […] Two editions […] simply eliminated the annotations, but six […] set them in a single column, extending across the page. Especially in the four of these […] that enlarge the type size to that of the poetry, one effect is to invite the reader to give the notes the same consideration as the poetic text. (Vander Meulen, "Unauthorized Editions of Pope's *Dunciad*, 1728–1751" 227)

3 Of the 54 works that I found, 51 have footnotes, one has foot- and endnotes, one has marginal notes, and for one I could not find a digitised version. For the rather complex way of placing the notes in Pope's 1735 *Works II* (a mix of footnotes and endnotes that differed depending on the format of the edition), see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* 216–31.

4 Even much earlier, Pope was very particular about the layout of his poems. In a letter to Broome (Sherburn tentatively dates it to 1717), he gives the following instructions for the printing of his *Works*: "I desire, for fear of mistakes, that you will cause the space for the initial letter to the Dedication to the Rape of the Lock to be made of the size of those in Trapp's Prælectiones. Only a small ornament at the top of that leaf, not so large as four lines breadth. The rest as I told you before. I hope they will not neglect to add at the bottom of the page in the Essay on Criticism, where are the lines 'Such was the Muse whose rules,' &c., a note thus: 'Essay on Poetry, by the present Duke of Buckingham,' and to print the line 'Nature's chief masterpiece' in italic" (Pope, *Corr.* 1: 394).

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Many pirate printers hence saw the annotations as an integral part of the work and – to varying degrees – even followed Pope's layout choices. However, William Warburton's *authorised* 1753 octavo version of Pope's *Works* deviates from the original layout and prints the notes on the *Dunciad*s as endnotes (cf. Sh. Rogers 288).[5] In a letter to John Knapton (25 April 1753), Warburton explains this decision. He proposes to print

> the notes of the Dunciad at the end of each Book, as in Mr Pope's q[uart]o edns. both of his Poems & Homer. My reasons are these, first it will be a variety from the other Edns. but principally I think the small charater [sic] of the notes in the specimen you have, deforms & hurts the beauty of the Edn. it [sic] appears to be much more elegant to have nothing but verses in the page or nothing but prose. besides [sic] if the notes be thrown together [...] they will be in the same letter [i.e. font size] with the text, which will make the Edn. more beautifull [sic] & what is still of more consequence will swell it out a little more, which it will want to be. (Warburton in Nichol 69)[6]

Both aesthetic and economic considerations, i.e. arriving at a number of pages that justifies the high price of a work, hence played a role when choosing the layout.[7]

5 Other versions of the 1753 *Works* in larger formats feature footnotes, however.

6 The blank space between "Edn." and "it" also appears in the original.

7 Another economic reason for using endnotes rather than footnotes is mentioned by Bowersock: before the arrival of computer typesetting, footnotes were considerably more difficult and more expensive to print than endnotes (cf. Bowersock 55).

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The Layout of Self-Annotations in Byron's Age

The layout of authorial notes in Byron's age was more diverse than in Pope's age, which almost exclusively favoured footnotes.[1] The table below shows the distribution of different kinds of layout choices in self-annotated English poetry between 1778 and 1824.[2] The table only takes into account original poetry (i.e. no English translations of works in other languages) and is based on the first edition of each work. It must be noted that even though the table shows certain tendencies, the *exact number* of self-annotated poems is to be taken with a grain of salt: it is very likely that there are more self-annotated poems around 1800 than I could find.[3] The table ends with 1824 because, given the focus of this book, I am only concerned with works published in Byron's lifetime.

Table 2 Layout of Self-Annotations 1778–1824

		1778–1787	1788–1797	1798–1807	1808–1817	1818–1824
Self-annotated English poems (total)		36	50	89	157	80
With endnotes	Number	4	10	15	71	43
	%	11,1 %	20 %	16,9 %	45,2 %	53,8 %
With footnotes	Number	28	35	65	56	24
	%	77,8 %	70 %	73 %	35,7 %	30 %
With both foot- and endnotes	Number	3	3	4	18	10
	%	8,3 %	6 %	4,5 %	11,5 %	12,5 %

1 Nevertheless, the layout of notes seems to have been a contested topic even by the 1760s. In February 1768, Thomas Gray wrote to James Beatty: "The Title (I would wish) should be only *Poems by Mr Gray* without any mention of notes or additions. […] Mr F. [the printer Robert Foulis] will also determine, whether the few notes there are shall stand at the bottom of the page (wch is better for the Reader) or be thrown to the end with references (wch improves the beauty of the book)" (Gray, *Corr*. 3: 1003–04, original emphasis; cf. Edson, "Introduction" xix).

2 1778 marks the publication of William Hayley's fairly successful *A Poetical Epistle to an Eminent Painter*, which was the first example of a poem with endnotes that I could find around 1800. There are, however, much earlier examples of poems with endnotes, e.g. Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar.*

3 For the reasons why this is very likely, see my "Information on the Collection" here: http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-68434.

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Table 2 Layout of Self-Annotations 1778–1824 (*cont.*)

		1778–1787	1788–1797	1798–1807	1808–1817	1818–1824
Other (or no scan available)	Number	1	2	5	12	3
	%	2,8 %	4 %	5,6 %	7,6 %[4]	3,8 %

The table shows that footnotes remained the predominant form in which self-annotations were presented until around 1810.[5] After that time, works that either only featured endnotes or a mix of footnotes and endnotes gained popularity. The most prominent works that use both footnotes and endnotes are Scott's poems (at least most of them) and Thomas Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

As noted in chapter 3.1.2, readers in the Romantic age were usually expected to first read the whole poem and to pay attention to the notes only in a second, more thorough reading. The desire not to disturb readers' first perusal of the poem can be seen in volumes that do not include any indication for the presence of an endnote (e.g. an asterisk or superscript number) in the text of the poem. Examples of this choice of layout can be seen in Southey's *The Curse of Kehama*, Shelley's *Queen Mab*, Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, and Byron's *Sardanapalus*. Volumes that include both footnotes and endnotes also often seem to be designed to interrupt the reading process as little as possible. The brief footnotes, which can be read quickly while perusing the page, provide information that is essential for understanding a passage (e.g. the translation of a foreign or dialect word), while the endnotes contain much more detailed information. In such cases, the presence of a footnote is usually indicated in the poem, whereas no sign points to the presence of the endnotes. Examples of this design choice include Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, Wordsworth's *River Duddon*, and the very first edition of Byron's *CHP* I and II. However, some works also

4 The rather high number here is due to the fact that for several works there were no digitised versions available, *not* due to the fact that there were many works with unusual layout choices.

5 The first entry for "footnote" in the *OED* dates from 1711, but in Byron's age footnotes were usually called "bottom notes" (see, e.g., J. Johnson, *Typographia* 95). Walter Scott, however, preferred the term "footnote", as John Murray tells Byron in a letter from 6 April 1815 (Murray 132).

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feature both long footnotes *and* long endnotes (prominent examples include Erasmus Darwin's *Temple of Nature* and *Botanic Garden*).

It appears that authors were usually allowed to decide themselves whether they wanted footnotes or endnotes or both. In October 1800, when preparing the new edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth wrote to his publishers Biggs and Cottle: "N. B. The following notes are to be printed at the end of the first volume" (W. Wordsworth and D. Wordsworth, *Letters 1787–1805* 303). Similarly, in October 1813, Thomas Moore sent an additional note to James Power and told him: "I wish the note engraved underneath, if it can be done conveniently" (T. Moore, *Letters* 1: 283). Authors could also suggest changes in the layout of their annotations. In 1808, Southey grew disappointed with the sales of *Thalaba* and decided that using endnotes instead of footnotes might be more reader-friendly: "I shall now place the notes at the end of each book" (Southey, *Coll. Letters* 3: letter 1518).

When preparing the publication of the first two cantos of *CHP*, Byron planned to follow Scott's fashion of using both footnotes and endnotes. In Robert Charles Dallas's fair copy, he expressly marked those notes that he wanted to be printed as footnotes (cf. Chatsiou, *Paratext and Poetics* 133–35; for a facsimile of the fair copy, see Erdman).[6] However, only the very first edition of *CHP* I and II follows these instructions; all later editions are printed with endnotes only. It is not known whether the decision to change the layout was Byron's, his publisher John Murray's, or the printer Thomas Davison's. In January 1814 (most likely referring to *The Corsair*), Byron also told Murray that "[w]hen published let the *Notes* be at the *end* as in the other tales" (*BLJ* 4: 11, original emphasis).

As a whole, the layout of Byron's annotations is very inconsistent. Neither John Murray nor John Hunt had a 'house style' that dictated how their authors should present their annotations in print.[7] As with *CHP*, the location of the annotations could also change between editions. For example, the first six editions of *The Giaour* were printed with footnotes and all subsequent editions with endnotes. The presentation of the annotations was not even consistent within the same volume. When *Cain, The Two Foscari*, and *Sardanapalus* were published together, *Sardanapalus* featured endnotes, whereas the other two

6 Nevertheless, Byron told Murray at roughly the same time (16 September 1811): "The Printer may place the notes in his *own way*, or *any way*, so that they are out of *my way*; I care nothing about types or margins" (*BLJ* 2: 100, original emphasis). This might suggest that, after all, Murray could later convince Byron to choose the layout himself and to indicate the notes that he wanted to be printed as footnotes, but unfortunately none of Murray's letters to Byron between September 1811 and September 1812 are extant (cf. Murray 7).

7 For a detailed overview of the placing of Byron's annotations, see Robinson *passim*.

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works were printed with footnotes. After Byron's falling out with Murray in 1822, his new publisher John Hunt used endnotes only for *Don Juan*; all of Byron's other works that were published by Hunt had footnotes. Apart from the indications in the fair copy of *CHP* I and II and the remark on *The Corsair*, Byron gave no instructions as to where to place the notes in his works.

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The Ambiguity of Dulness's Triumph: An Overview

The many different ambiguous and (self-)contradictory annotations as well as other (para)textual passages discussed in chapter 2.3.4 are extremely intricate. To facilitate understanding, I have summarised them here.

Italics: Readings that suggest that Dulness will triumph/has triumphed.
Underlined: Readings that suggest that Dulness will not triumph.

Table 3 The Ambiguity of Dulness's Triumph – An Overview

Version	Passage/Content	Possibilities	Interpretations/Outcomes
1729	**Beginning of third book (3.1–12):** Dulness sends Tibbald a dream about her triumph.	(1) *This dream shows reality.*	(1) *Dulness will triumph/has triumphed.*
		(2) This dream is a mere chimaera.	(2) Dulness will not triumph.
	Note by Scriblerus (3.5–6n): the passage above means that this dream is a mere chimaera; nothing about it is true.	(1) Scriblerus is Pope's serious mouthpiece.	(1) The dream is a chimaera. Dulness will not triumph.
		(2) *Scriblerus is ironic.*	(2) *The dream is no chimaera. Dulness has triumphed/will triumph.*
		(3) *Scriblerus is serious but wrong.*	(3) *The dream is no chimaera. Dulness has triumphed/will triumph.*
	End of third book (3.358): the dream about Dulness's triumph flies out of the ivory gate, i.e. the gate through which false visions pass.	(1) *Pope uses the image of the ivory gate ironically.*	(1) *The allusion to the gate is an ironic safety-mechanism. The dream is no chimaera. Dulness has triumphed/will triumph.*
		(2) Pope uses the ivory gate as the origin of false dreams.	(2) The dream is indeed a chimaera. Dulness will not triumph/has not triumphed.

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Table 3 The Ambiguity of Dulness's Triumph – An Overview (*cont.*)

Version	Passage/Content	Possibilities	Interpretations/Outcomes
	Note (partly) by Scriblerus (3.337–38n): the dunces seem harmless, but they are dangerous. Then the contradiction: no, actually, contemporary culture is so strong that it cannot be vanquished by the incompetent dunces. Also: the reference to the ivory gate shows that the dunces cannot triumph.	(1) *The dunces are really dangerous.*	(1) *Dulness will triumph/has triumphed.*
		(2) The dunces are harmless.	(2) Dulness will not triumph.
		(3) Contemporary culture is strong.	(3) Dulness poses no threat to contemporary culture.
		(4) *Contemporary culture is nearly defunct.*	(4) *Contemporary culture has already been vanquished by the dunces/Dulness.*
		(5) Dreams from the ivory gate are false.	(5) Dulness will not triumph.
		(6) *Dreams from the ivory gate are true.*	(6) *Dulness will triumph/has triumphed.*
	Argument to third book: This book offers a Pisgah-sight of Dulness's triumph.	(1) *The Pisgah-sight shows the future.*	(1) *Dulness has not triumphed yet but will triumph.*
		(2) *The Pisgah-sight shows the present.*	(2) *Dulness has already triumphed.*
	Intertextual note (3.358n): quotes the end of the sixth book of the *Aeneid.*	(1) Virgil uses the ivory gate to show that Aeneas's vision is wrong.	(1) The vision of Dulness's triumph in the *Dunciad*s is likewise incorrect; Dulness will not triumph.
		(2) *Aeneas's vision shows the truth.*	(2) *The vision of Dulness's triumph in the* Dunciad*s is true; Dulness has already triumphed.*
1743	**Reference to the ivory gate (3.340):** appears in the third book; Dulness's triumph is depicted in fourth book	(1) *Dulness's triumph is not part of Cibber's dream but real.*	(1) *Dulness has already triumphed.*

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Table 3 The Ambiguity of Dulness's Triumph – An Overview (*cont.*)

Version	Passage/Content	Possibilities	Interpretations/Outcomes
	Note signed by Bentley (3.5–6n): Scriblerus's argument that the reference to the ivory gate shows that Dulness will not triumph is wrong.	(1) Bentley is wrong for the 1729 version, *but he serves as Pope's serious mouthpiece for the 1743 version.*	(1) The 1729 version remains ambiguous about Dulness's triumph. *Dulness really triumphs in the 1743 version.*
		(2) *Bentley serves as Pope's serious mouthpiece for both the three-book and the four-book* Dunciads.	(2) *Dulness triumphs both in the 1729 and the 1743* Dunciads.
		(3) Bentley is altogether wrong and is ridiculed by Pope.	(3) Dulness does not triumph in any version of the *Dunciads*.
	Unsigned note (4.584n): the dunces are too incompetent to be dangerous.	(1) We can trust this note.	(1) Dulness will never triumph.
		(2) *We cannot trust this note.*	(2) *Dulness will triumph/has already triumphed.*
	Scriblerus's and Bentley's notes about the Mysteries (4.4n; 4.517n): these notes implicitly argue that *true* visions pass through the ivory gate in the *Aeneid*.	(1) *Pope refers to the ivory gate in the* Aeneid *and the notion of Mysteries to indicate that the visions that come from this gate show things that have already come to pass. Bentley and Scriblerus are his serious spokesmen.*	(1) *Dulness has already triumphed.*
		(2) Scriblerus's and Bentley's references to the mysteries should be dismissed. Pope uses the ivory gate as the origin of false rather than true visions. He ridicules Bentley's and Scriblerus's arguments.	(2) Dulness will not triumph.

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Speakers and 'Authors' in Byron's *The Giaour*

In chapter 3.2.1.2, I have argued that the meaning of Byron's facetious notes in *The Giaour* partly relies on the question of who can be seen as annotating whom. For this reason, I here provide an overview that attempts to unravel the very complex communicative situation in this poem, with its many different speakers and two different fictional authors, i.e. the Levantine coffee-house singer and the European editor who allegedly translated, expanded, and annotated the singer's original tale. Slightly different overviews are provided in Kroeber 140; Sundell 590; Shilstone 52–55; McGann, *Fiery Dust* 142–46; Gleckner, *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise*, 98–117; and Bode, "Byron's Dis-Orientations" 76–78.

Table 4 *Speakers and 'Authors' in* The Giaour

Lines	**What is described?**	**Who speaks?**	**'Authored' by whom?**
1–167	Condition of Greece	European editor	European editor
168–179	Description of the beach	Unclear; featureless speaker	Coffee-house singer
180–276	Giaour riding at the beach	Fisherman	Coffee-house singer
277–351	Hassan's ruined palace	Unclear (speaker knows more than the fisherman can possibly know; not clear whether hetero- or homodiegetic)	Coffee-house singer
352–387	Leila is drowned	Fisherman	Coffee-house singer
388–421	Butterfly simile	European editor	European editor
422–438	Scorpion simile	European editor	European editor
439–536	Rumours about Leila, Hassan, and the Giaour	Unclear. The speaker lives in the same city but is most likely not the fisherman because he refers to the fisherman's story of ll. 168–276 with the words "But *others* say, that on that night" (467, my emphasis).	Coffee-house singer

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Table 4 *Speakers and 'Authors' in* The Giaour (*cont.*)

Lines	**What is described?**	**Who speaks?**	**'Authored' by whom?**
537–688	Description of nature, fight between Hassan & Giaour, Hassan's death, Giaour speaking directly to Hassan	Unidentified narrator. First seems heterodiegetic, then is suddenly shown to be part of the narrative.	Coffee-house singer
689–722	Hassan's mother learns of his death	Unidentified narrator. Seems to be a heterodiegetic narrator with zero focalisation because he has insights into the mother's thoughts. Could also be the coffee-house singer himself.	Coffee-house singer
723–786	Narrator contemplates Hassan's grave and curses the Giaour	Muslim narrator (maybe the fisherman, maybe the narrator of 439–536, maybe Hassan's mother, maybe the coffee-house singer himself)	Coffee-house singer
787–831	Monk and fisherman talking about the Giaour	No narrator, only reported speech (monk and fisherman talking)	Coffee-house singer
832–882	Reflections on the Giaour	Unclear. Either the monk who spoke in the previous passage or an unidentified heterodiegetic narrator. (The monk here, however, would suddenly think more highly of the Giaour than in the previous passage.)	Coffee-house singer?
883–915	Monk talking to the fisherman	No narrator, only reported speech (unclear whether this is the same monk as in 787–831)	Coffee-house singer

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Table 4 *Speakers and 'Authors' in* The Giaour (*cont.*)

Lines	**What is described?**	**Who speaks?**	**'Authored' by whom?**
916–970	Reflections on love and solitude	European editor	European editor
971–1328	Giaour speaking to one of the monks (probably the prior, not the monk who talked to the fisherman)	No narrator; only records the Giaour speaking	Coffee-house singer
1329–1443	Speaker telling us that this is all that we know of the Giaour	Unclear. Is this the coffee-house singer (referring to the whole narrative) or the prior (referring to the Giaour's confession)?	Coffee-house singer

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Miriam Lahrsow - 978-3-657-79528-4
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